

# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1929.

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MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON AND EGYPT

THE EMPIRE CUSTOMS UNION ... .. J. A. SPENDER

DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT ... .. RAY STRACHEY

SO THIS IS MAJESTY ... .. WINIFRED HOLTBY



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**HIS MAJESTY'S.** Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

**THE NEW MOON.**  
**"TESS O' D'URBERVILLES."**  
**"LOVE LIES."**  
**"THESE PRETTY THINGS."**  
**"MR. CINDERS."**  
**BITTER SWEET.**

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**LYRIC, Hammersmith.** Wed., Sat., 2.30.  
**PRINCE OF WALES.** Thurs & Sat., 2.30.  
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**"WAKE UP AND DREAM."**  
**LA VIE PARISIENNE.**  
**JOURNEY'S END.**  
**THE CO-OPTIMISTS.**  
**"THE SKIN GAME."**

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AND ATHENÆUM



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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

NOTHING that is happening at the present time—not even the stoppage in the cotton trade—is fraught with graver potential consequences to our economic life than the movement of gold from London to Paris. The proximate cause of the movement is clear enough. Faced with a stringent credit position at home, French banks and other institutions are repatriating the substantial balances which they have lying in London and New York. In doing so, they are following the only course open to them. But the question arises as to whether this movement is being engineered in any way by the French financial authorities with an eye to the discussions on the Young plan which have now been opened at the Hague. Mr. Snowden has made it clear that he means to be very difficult at the Conference; are we witnessing an attempt to persuade him of the dangers of falling foul of France? Directly, of course, the Bank of France has played no part in the gold movement. She has not attempted to withdraw any part of the huge balances which she herself holds in London and New York. But may she not have contrived to force the other French banks to withdraw their balances by deliberately creating the monetary stringency which is the cause of the trouble? That is the question which is the subject of a good deal of uneasy speculation; and the question is clearly a very serious one; for if the French were to treat the derangement of our economic life by a concerted attack on our gold reserve as a legitimate diplomatic weapon, the possibility of genuinely friendly relations between the two countries would be fatally impaired.

We may regard it, therefore, as fortunate that the available evidence does not support this view. The Bank of France appears to be innocent of active responsibility of any sort for the present gold drain. It is not merely that she is not withdrawing her own balances; her part in the monetary stringency that has developed is a purely passive one; and a passive rôle in such a situation is in conformity with her tradition. The movement of gold to France is, indeed, in a sense, the natural outcome of underlying economic tendencies. The balance of trade has been heavily in favour of France for a long time past; and the heavy stamp duty on foreign issues, which has survived from the inflation period, has checked Frenchmen from investing their savings abroad as they used to do on an enormous scale. The result is a fundamental lack of equilibrium, with a constant tendency for the balance of payments to swing in France's favour; and it is only the fact that the French banks, including especially the Bank of France, have been steadily increasing their short balances abroad, that has hitherto averted such a movement as is now taking place. The foreign balances of the Bank of France have become so large that it is easy to appreciate that she has no desire to add to them; and this brings us to the only degree of responsibility that it seems reasonable to attribute to her in the present connection. She might have averted the present movement of gold by taking steps which would have resulted in increasing her already enormous foreign balances. In another political atmosphere, or if relations with the Bank of England were rather more cordial, she might have taken these steps. She has not gone out of her way to be nasty to Mr. Snowden.



She has merely refrained from going out of her way to be nice to him:—

"Thou shalt not kill, yet needst not strive officiously to keep alive."

That seems to be the full extent of the responsibility of the Bank of France; and in all the circumstances, we are hardly entitled to complain.

\* \* \*

But this explanation, while reassuring from one standpoint, is disconcerting from another; for it suggests that our own position as regards the balance of international payments may be fundamentally weak. The French banks, as we have said, have been withdrawing their balances from New York as well as from London; but it is from London that all the gold has been drawn, and this is due not only to the fact that London is nearer to Paris than New York is, but also to the fact that our exchanges were weak before the movement started. To some extent, certainly, the withdrawal of French balances has merely served to substitute Paris for New York as the destination of gold which would have left London in any case.

\* \* \*

We come here indeed to a complex of factors which gives us, perhaps, more solid grounds for apprehension than there would be if the present drain could be attributed to political motives. There is in operation an undeniable tendency towards a "flight from the pound." The tide of investment fashion is against British securities; whether with or without foundation, people at home, and still more people abroad, are vaguely apprehensive of the effects of a Labour Government. This comes to aggravate a situation which for some years has been decidedly precarious. During the period when the gold standard was restored and the long coal stoppage took place, we were not making ends meet on international account, and equilibrium was only maintained by the increasing volume of short balances, due to foreign institutions, which were deposited in London. These balances are now being withdrawn when we can ill afford to lose them. The most serious factor in the situation is the tendency towards a "flight from the pound" to which we have referred. For this raises the question as to whether the gold movement may not continue. If we can assume that the Bank of France will not go out of her way to injure our position by withdrawing her own balances, we need not be very much concerned at the withdrawal of the privately-held balances. To that movement there are clear limits—say, £50 millions at the outside; and if we are ready, as we should be, to raise the fiduciary issue, a loss of gold on that scale need not embarrass us. But it will be another story if the balance of payments remains against us, because investors, British and foreign, are distrustful of British securities. In the last analysis, it is the state of mind of the investing public that matters even more than that of the French authorities.

\* \* \*

The compliments paid to the Dutch authorities at the opening session of the Hague Conference should be very cordially endorsed. It was no easy matter for Holland to make arrangements consonant with their high standard of hospitality and courtesy to foreign political visitors, for they were asked to find accommodation for the delegations and their staffs at very short notice and at a very inconvenient time. When the private session started on Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Snowden made a long general statement which was

communicated to the Press. While welcoming some features of the Young Report, he objected strongly to the distribution of the unconditional and the conditional payments; to the alteration of the Spa percentages, and to deliveries in kind. He was justified in claiming that all Parties in this country were agreed that "so long as reparations are paid and received, so long as debts are payable, Great Britain will insist upon being fairly treated in this matter." Nevertheless, it is slightly uncomfortable to be represented at an international conference by the man with the stiffest neck on the subject under discussion.

\* \* \*

The French Chamber of Deputies listened to M. Briand's statement of policy on July 31st, and passed a vote of confidence in the new Government by a majority of 189. The debate was not remarkable in any particular. M. Briand reasserted the argument by which M. Poincaré so often paralyzed active opposition to his policy. Every controversy upon domestic politics must for the time being be subordinated to the duty of supporting the Government's foreign policy. M. Briand very properly emphasized the importance of giving the Government a good working majority during the Hague conference. The Socialist deputies did not register their votes; and the criticism of the Opposition speakers was extremely conventional. M. Briand has never been able to maintain a majority for the same length of time as M. Poincaré, and is indeed rather strongly associated with the system of bi-monthly cabinets of the pre-war period. The stability of the new Government is, therefore, under suspicion.

\* \* \*

The implications of the draft treaty with Egypt are discussed at length in our leading article this week. The proposals certainly represent an honest endeavour to remove all those frictional points which have made Anglo-Egyptian relations abnormal and difficult. Great Britain is to be represented in Egypt by an ambassador, instead of a high commissioner; and Great Britain undertakes to secure Egypt representation on the League. These two clauses virtually confer full sovereignty upon Egypt. The practical consequences of granting this sovereign status are also embodied in the treaty. The relations between the two countries are governed by an alliance, which binds each contracting party to assist the other in war; the British garrison is to be moved to the Canal zone as soon as the necessary accommodation has been found; Great Britain recognizes that the capitulatory regime is out of date, and undertakes to exert its influence with foreign Powers to get it liquidated by common agreement. An Egyptian battalion is to be admitted to the Sudan, and a further undertaking is given that the joint sovereignty agreement of 1899 shall be loyally operated by both parties.

\* \* \*

Discussions for a resumption of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Soviet Russia have been suspended. After an exchange of very formal and conventional notes, M. Dovgalevsky, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, met the Foreign Secretary on the afternoon of July 29th. Mr. Henderson evidently told him that the two countries could not exchange ambassadors until the consent of Parliament had been obtained, and that Parliament would not meet again until the end of October. He suggested, however, that the interval might be usefully occupied by an exchange of views on questions at issue. M. Dovgalevsky replied that his instructions gave him no powers to discuss



anything, and no new instructions can be issued until the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee have considered the question. The resulting deadlock has been characteristically misrepresented in Moscow, but the whole incident is of little importance, since it probably represents only a reluctance on each side to appear unduly eager to embrace the other. We still expect to see "normal diplomatic relations" resumed in due course, and as the Soviet Government attributes importance to those relations, Mr. Henderson may be well advised to extract promises of good behaviour.

\* \* \*

Conversations between officially appointed Chinese and Russian representatives have taken place at Manchuli and Harbin, and this has considerably eased the tension in Manchuria. But neither side is to be congratulated upon its methods of conducting business. Notes have been exchanged which contain very little but proposals that outstanding issues shall be discussed; the exact meaning to be given to outstanding issues is still being subjected to long examination by each side. The Chinese authorities, being rather alarmed at the independent attitude of the Manchurian magnate at the Manchuli conference, have certainly made less embracing proposals at Harbin than were originally made at Manchuli. The Soviet representative has expressed the surprise and indignation with which Soviet authorities always open a diplomatic conference. Here the matter rests, for the present.

\* \* \*

The American Government's proposal to assist the disputants has, however, been rejected by the Japanese Government. The United States suggested that a commission composed of delegates appointed by six Powers should act as an organ of conciliation to the Chinese and Soviet Governments. The Japanese view is that their special position in Manchuria is registered in the Treaty of Portsmouth and that they do not wish Manchurian questions to be discussed and examined by an international commission. This is the conventional attitude of Powers to whom zones of special interest have been granted by treaty. It may, however, be doubted whether the Japanese Government will be well advised to adhere to it too rigidly. The American Government have practically announced—though they have not said it in so many words—that they regard a Chino-Russian quarrel involving a breach of the Kellogg Pact to be a matter of international concern. If the Japanese persist in their present refusal they may be faced with a further proposal that they themselves undertake the office of mediator if the present discussions break down.

\* \* \*

The Japanese Government have been so cautious and reticent about the Anglo-American conversations on a naval agreement that any reliable report from Tokyo is, at the present moment, of very great interest. The Navy Department have during the last week made an important statement of policy to the JAPAN ADVERTISER; this statement in large measure confirms previous rumours that Japan intends to demand a higher ratio in auxiliaries than was granted her at the Washington Conference in surface ships. The "high naval official" who has taken the JAPAN ADVERTISER into his confidence states that Japan's claim will be for 70 per cent. of the total auxiliary tonnage finally allotted to Great Britain and America. The Japanese can make out a fairly strong case on purely strategical grounds, and can support their case by the argument that, if

the 5 : 5 : 3 ratio is eventually based on something like the present American cruiser tonnage, Japan's present strength is well above the figure 3. American comments upon this statement will be awaited with interest.

\* \* \*

The Cotton stoppage has now continued for ten or twelve days, and there is no sign of any definite move to bring it to an end. On Tuesday evening a wordy statement was issued from Downing Street to the effect that the Prime Minister would be glad to assist in a settlement of the dispute if anyone would tell him how to do so. The interest of the Government in the state of the cotton trade had been shown by the decision to hold an inquiry by a committee, the personnel of which was announced a few days ago. (The Committee consists of Mr. Graham, President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Alan Anderson, Mr. Joseph Jones, Secretary to the Yorkshire Mineworkers' Association, and Sir William McLintock). "But obviously," continued the Downing Street announcement, "its work cannot affect the present position." That position is that the employers still stand firmly for a reduction of wages and refuse to consider arbitration in any form, while the operatives contend that there should be no reduction of wages until all the causes of depression in the industry have been investigated.

\* \* \*

The Liberal Summer School, which came into being nine years ago, has been primarily concerned with the development of a Liberal Industrial policy. With the publication of the Industrial Report, and the Unemployment policy of the party at the recent election, that object has been largely achieved. This year's School at Cambridge has, therefore, concerned itself less with policy than with the practical means whereby its policy can be carried into effect, and the constitutional problems arising out of a three-party system. The consideration of political method is a new departure for the Summer School. Professor Ernest Barker spoke on "The Future of Representative Government," and Mr. Elliott Dodds opened a discussion on "The Three-Party System." There were also discussions on Electoral Reform, at which the merits of P.R. and the Alternative Vote were debated.

\* \* \*

Another radical departure at this year's School was the discussion of "Youth and the Progressive Parties," in which younger members of the party were given an opportunity of stating their views. Three of the young women candidates at the last election, Miss Enid Lapthorne, Dr. Betty Morgan, and Miss F. L. Josephy, spoke with some humour of the attitude of youth to the progressive parties. Miss Josephy alone spoke hopefully of a return to a two-party system. Four of the young men candidates, Mr. Frank Owen, M.P., Mr. R. Bernays, Mr. A. P. Marshall, and Mr. David Keir spoke on the same subject. Three of them stressed the need for maintaining the independence of the Liberal Party, but Mr. Marshall frankly appealed for a fusion of progressive forces. The discussion on these addresses was very vigorous and a little heated, and it was left to Mr. Ramsay Muir to resolve all the viewpoints expressed into a higher unity. The attendance has been extremely good this year. It would appear that the election results have had a stimulating effect on the discussions and the attendance. It was fitting that Mr. W. T. Layton should remind members of the School that they had pursued ideas in a scientific manner confident that those ideas would prevail.

## MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON AND EGYPT

**T**HERE is no department of administration in which the new Government seems more confident than in that of foreign affairs. The Prime Minister has elected to keep the vital discussions with the United States on naval disarmament in his own hands, and his touch and temperament should make a strong appeal to American opinion. Some hitch in the negotiations appears to have brought him hurriedly to London for a talk with General Dawes this week, but we trust that nothing will be allowed to interfere with the visit to America in October. Mr. Arthur Henderson has firmly grasped the reins of his office, and even his admirers have, we think, been agreeably surprised by the readiness and clarity of his ministerial utterances in the House of Commons, and by his handling of such questions as have presented themselves for immediate action. He has been wise, or fortunate, too, in his choice of assistants, and the presence of Mr. Hugh Dalton and Mr. Philip Baker at his elbow is an assurance that Mr. Henderson will be kept fully in touch with European realities and with the standpoint of the League of Nations. The debate on Lord Lloyd's resignation was, of course, a superb Parliamentary opportunity, a gratuitous offering from Mr. Churchill to the Government, but the opportunity was skilfully used. Altogether there seems good reason to hope that the change of Government will bring a great and salutary change in the conduct of foreign affairs. This may be brought about without any real breach of the accepted theory of continuity in foreign policy. There need be no sudden reversals of previous decisions. A difference in emphasis, in energy, in outlook, and the removal of inhibitions, may bring a transformation in the international field.

An instance of the application of this new spirit to an old and thorny problem is provided this week in the proposals for an Anglo-Egyptian settlement which have been published simultaneously in London and Cairo. The Egyptian question has remained substantially unchanged since 1922, when Mr. Lloyd George's Government declared the independence of Egypt, subject to four important points reserved for settlement by negotiation between the two countries. These were:—

- (1) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt.
- (2) The defence of Egypt against all foreign aggression or interference, direct or indirect.
- (3) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt and the protection of minorities.
- (4) The Sudan.

It was laid down in the Declaration of 1922 that, pending the conclusion of agreements on these points, the *status quo* should remain intact, but it was never intended that the relations between Britain and Egypt should remain permanently based on the insecure foundation of the reserved points. Successive British Governments have realized that until some solution of these questions had been found our position in Egypt would remain a cause of perpetual anxiety and embarrassment. Repeated attempts have therefore been

made to reach a settlement, the last and most definite of which began in the autumn of 1927 and finally broke down in March, 1928. At that time, Sir Austen Chamberlain arranged a draft treaty with Sarwat Pasha, which was rejected by the Egyptian Parliament, and it was strongly rumoured that the chief stumbling-block was the location of the British troops in Egypt. The draft treaty provided that these should remain for ten years in Cairo and Alexandria, and that at the end of that time the question should be reconsidered, and, failing agreement, referred to the League of Nations. The Egyptians were anxious, of course, to secure the removal of the troops as far as possible from the capital. Whether it was on this point that the negotiations broke down, or on some other, it is clear that it is a settled principle of British policy to seek agreement with Egypt, and that the only question is whether Mr. Henderson has gone about it in the right way and offered the right terms.

As to the method of approach, it is arguable that to negotiate with a Prime Minister who has dissolved Parliament and suppressed his political opponents is to give countenance to these undemocratic proceedings and to invite the rejection of your proposals by any representative body that may eventually be called together. To this the Government would reply that they had to negotiate with somebody, that Mahmoud Pasha was in fact Prime Minister of Egypt, and that he was in London; and, further, that their proposals are to be submitted to a newly elected Egyptian Parliament, which could, presumably, accept the proposals while rejecting Mahmoud, should it desire to do so. In our judgment, this procedure fully preserves the constitutional proprieties, and the only question which remains in doubt is one of tactics. We should have been more confident of the acceptance of the British offer if it had been made when an Egyptian Parliament was in existence, but this would have involved delay. It should be noted, by the way, that if the proposals are accepted by Egypt they are to be submitted to the British Parliament "with a view to the conclusion and ratification of a treaty carrying them into effect." This foreshadows the consultation of Parliament before a treaty is concluded; a step which Sir Herbert Samuel very properly asked the Government to take, when he spoke in the Lloyd debate.

The substance of the proposals will no doubt be criticized from many angles both in Britain and in Egypt. We will refrain from quoting the early hurried comments that have been made—including those of Lord Brentford—since these will no doubt be subject to revision. The effect of the proposals on the reserved points is, briefly, as follows:—

- (1) The security of the communications of the British Empire in Egypt would be maintained by the presence of "such forces as His Britannic Majesty considers necessary" in the Suez Canal zone. This is the most important respect in which the proposals differ from the treaty negotiated with Sarwat Pasha. It clearly makes all the difference between real and sham self-government from the Egyptian point of view, for the presence of foreign troops in the principal cities is a constant reminder of tutelage. There is, we believe,



no convincing military argument against the withdrawal of British troops to the Canal zone, and the proposals include the provision by the Egyptian Government of barracks, amenities, and an adequate water supply, before the move is made.

(2) The defence of Egypt against foreign aggression would be secured by the adhesion of Egypt to the League of Nations, and by an alliance with Britain. The terms of the alliance would oblige each Party to come immediately to the aid of the other in the event of war, but this provision is subject to another, which we will quote in full:—

"Nothing in the present proposals is intended to or shall in any way prejudice the rights and obligations which devolve, or may devolve, upon either of the High Contracting Parties under the Covenant of the League of Nations or the Treaty for the Renunciation of War signed at Paris on August 27th, 1928."

This is excellent, and should remove all reasonable objection to the alliance from the international point of view. Indeed, as one hostile commentator plaintively observes, it "appears to render altogether nugatory the reservation made by Great Britain in accepting the Kellogg Pact, and to wipe out at a stroke that assertion of a British Monroe Doctrine—as it has conveniently been termed—in regard to Egypt which has hitherto been an underlying assumption of our relations with that country."

(3) The protection of foreign interests in Egypt, and the protection of minorities, would devolve upon the Egyptian Government. This is a drastic proposal, which will undoubtedly cause alarm among the European population in Cairo and Alexandria, but it is the logical corollary of the Declaration of 1922, and the blow will be softened to some extent by a provision that the Egyptian Government shall retain, for at least five years from the coming into force of a treaty based on the proposals, a certain European element in their city police, which will remain for the same period under the command of British officers.

(4) Lastly, the Sudan would be governed according to the conventions of 1899, until new conventions are concluded, and the Governor-General would continue to act on the joint behalf of both Parties. If the treaty were worked in a friendly spirit, the British Government would be prepared to examine sympathetically a proposal for the return to the Sudan of an Egyptian battalion simultaneously with the withdrawal of the British forces from Cairo.

These proposals represent, as Mr. Henderson declares in a covering note, "the extreme limit" to which a British Government could go "in their desire to achieve a lasting and honourable settlement of outstanding questions between Great Britain and Egypt." For our part, we believe that the proposals are sound and reasonable, and that Egypt would be well advised to accept them as the best terms that they are ever likely to get from a British Foreign Minister. If they are accepted by the Egyptian Parliament, they will certainly be hotly opposed by a section of the Conservatives at Westminster, but there should be no difficulty in securing an adequate majority in the present House of Commons for a liberal foreign policy.

## THE EMPIRE CUSTOMS UNION

By J. A. SPENDER.

LATE in the year 1895 or early in the year 1896 the word went out to the newspapers that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who had recently come to the Colonial Office, was studying something that was called a "Zollverein." Since knowledge of the German language was then, as now, a rare accomplishment among British politicians and journalists, there was great mystification. But the idea was understood to be truly imperial, and the claim was made for it that it was "real free trade" on the modernist, scientific lines worked out by German economists, List and others, in contradistinction to the spurious article foisted on Great Britain by Cobden and Bright. A large number of magazine and newspaper articles and some books were written about it, and these were eagerly lapped up by Tory Protectionists, who now began to flatter themselves that they were in the front line of modern and scientific thinkers on the fiscal question.

After that the fiscal question went underground and the Colonial Office had its hands full with the Jameson Raid and the Boer War. But Mr. Garvin has told us in a recent *OBSERVER* article—and no one can possibly have better opportunities for knowing the facts—that Mr. Chamberlain studied the Zollverein exhaustively, and came to the conclusion that it was impracticable. Nevertheless, it served a purpose in the evolution of the fiscal question. The Tariff Reformer was now furnished with a respectable mental history for what might otherwise have seemed a crude resurrection of the corpse which Disraeli had declared to be damned as well as dead. He now presented himself as a student of imperial relations in the light of modern economics, who after carefully exploring what at first sight had seemed the better and more scientific way, had very reluctantly come to the conclusion that it was blocked; and had therefore been driven back on the less desirable but still imperative policy of Imperial Preference and Tariff Reform. To the weaker brethren of the Unionist Party who, though Protectionist at heart, yet trembled at the thought of what the electors might say, if their real intentions were avowed, this seemed a stroke of genius, and the great majority of them ran down the steep place, waving the Imperial banner.

I need not now enter into the various motives which led Mr. Chamberlain into this campaign. Genuine concern for the future of an Empire which he never could think of as holding together unless bound by mechanical and material ties no doubt entered into them and mingled with the political instinct which told him that some striking diversion would be needed to save the Tory Party from the reaction after the Boer War. But there is no doubt that he did thoroughly explore the "Zollverein," or Imperial Customs Union, as Lord Beaverbrook calls it, and came to the conclusion that crusading for that cause would bring him speedily up against a blank wall. Everything that has since happened confirms this conclusion, but since the project has been seriously revived and once more put forward as the way of salvation for the Tory Party, the reasons which make it both impossible and undesirable need a little consideration.

The first of these may be found succinctly stated in the Report of the Australian Prime Minister's Tariff Committee just published in Sydney and summarized briefly by cable in this country. This Committee, evidently referring to Lord Beaverbrook's crusade, declares that "Empire Free



Trade," i.e., the proposal to abolish all duties within the Empire while maintaining duties against the foreigner, would be "a positive disaster to Australia because it must involve the abandonment of substantial protection to Australian manufacturers with which British imports compete." The *OBSERVER*'s Sydney correspondent, whose report I am quoting, adds that "no party here dare accept such abandonment," and the report concludes by saying that the effect would be "to reduce foreign imports, and to prejudice disastrously Australian products." There is no doubt that, if the question were put to Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, or India, the answer would be the same.

We may think these Dominions to be obstinate and misguided, but so long as they hold these opinions, there could be no greater unwisdom than to fling this bone of contention to the British Commonwealth. Just in proportion as British trade flourishes in the Dominions, their manufacturers feel British competition to be the most formidable competition. They will give it preference over the foreigner but always on condition that they are duly protected from the British competitor, and they will fight, as protected interests always do, if they consider themselves threatened. In such a fight, if it took place, far greater issues than the fiscal would immediately arise. It would be said that the freedom of the self-governing Dominions to settle their own taxation was at stake, and we should be once more on the dangerous ground on which we lost the American colonies. Nothing could be less likely to cement the Empire than to base its unity on the shifting and contentious ground of fiscal combination.

This alone would be decisive, but, of course, the whole fiscal argument as it affects the British people also comes into play. To base imperial union on the taxation of the British people's food and other necessary commodities would be no less dangerous than to base it on the withdrawal of protection from the Dominion manufacturer. We import £830,000,000 from foreign countries as against £364,000,000 from British countries; we export £369,000,000 to foreign countries as against £327,000,000 to British countries. The British trade is, of course, enormously valuable, and should be developed by all possible energy and enterprise, but we cannot afford to compromise our freedom to buy from the foreigner what we need and to sell to him what he will buy from us. This argument, it may be added, is greatly reinforced by our experience in the war when it became an imperative necessity to get our supplies by the shortest sea-passage from the nearest source, irrespective of its nationality. The Empire would not have been stronger but far weaker in war, if we had had to draw our meat supplies from Australia instead of from the Argentine.

It would be difficult to think of a scheme which encounters a greater number of fatal objections than the Empire Customs Union, and its revival after thirty years is unlikely to have more than a very short run. Nevertheless, that it should be revived at all in these times is unfortunate, for, if it is sufficiently advertised, the foreigner, who does not know its local and domestic history, may be led to believe that we seriously intend to build a tariff wall round our Empire; and that certainly would not make a favourable atmosphere for the reduction of naval armaments, whether our own or other people's. Indeed, one may put it higher and say with truth that the claim to treat a quarter of the earth's surface as a British trade enclave would be an enormous new potential cause of war.

## DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT

**M**ILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT, who died at the beginning of this week, was one of the greatest Englishwomen of her generation, and one of those indomitable pioneers to whom the world owes its progress. When she was born, in 1847, the movement for the freedom of women had not begun, and only a few bold and solitary people dared even to imagine that it could be achieved. While she was a child education was thought unnecessary, it was not actually dangerous for women; games, independent thoughts, free reading and personal ambitions were all improper, and young ladies were caged up, in a manner now almost inconceivable, not only by the legal facts of their position, but still more by the accepted conventions and proprieties of the day. Marriage was their only possible outlet; and marriage meant entire subordination. A woman's property, her children, her person, and her conscience were supposed to be in the keeping of her husband, and meekness, humility, and self-sacrifice were her appropriate dispositions.

To Millicent Garrett this state of things appeared intolerable, and even as a child she determined to try and change it. Her elder sister Elizabeth was attempting, with her father's active encouragement, to qualify as a doctor, and Elizabeth's friend, Emily Davies had set her hand to the task of organizing women's education. To both these girls their own special work appeared but as a part of the whole emancipation movement, and Millicent Garrett, before she was seventeen, had planned what was to be her share, namely, political enfranchisement, the key to it all. Fortunate in the support of her own family, and passionately interested in the public events of the time, she had no toleration for the theory that women's sphere lay apart from their country's fortunes, and that ignorance and irresponsibility were their portion. She could herself just remember the Crimean War, and had closely followed the fortunes of Garibaldi, and the American Civil War, and it was natural to her mind to care for causes and questions, to speculate on the problems of liberty and government, and to relate these problems to the actual position of her own sex. When therefore the organized women's movement began, when Barbara Bodichon opened her little office in Langham Place, when John Stuart Mill presented the first Women's Suffrage Petition in the House of Commons in 1867, and when Mrs. Peter Taylor called together the first regular Women's Suffrage Committee in 1868, Millicent Garrett was ready; and from that moment until the cause was won she kept her hand to the plough.

In 1867 she married Henry Fawcett, and the circles in which they moved in Cambridge and London gave them fresh opportunities for advancing the cause in which they both believed. Professor Fawcett was one of the philosophic Radicals, and a friend of Mill; and in sharing his life and his work his wife gained great political experience. For Henry Fawcett was blind, and though he did not allow this to prevent his public or his University work, he could not have done so much without her constant co-operation. He was a Member of Parliament, interested and prominent in all the great movements of the day, and became Postmaster-General in one of Gladstone's administrations, from which post, however, he had resigned before his death in 1884. During the years of Mrs. Fawcett's marriage the women's movement had taken form, and she had had a prominent part in its shaping. The Suffrage Bill, which had been first introduced by John Stuart Mill, had not got far in the House of Commons, and the first stages of hope and expectation had quickly been succeeded by the tedium of slow propaganda. Just in so far as the full implications

of the ideals of the movement were understood, so the opposition crystallized, and during those years, and many succeeding ones, the very mention of "women's rights" caused howls of derision and indignation on all sides. Mrs. Fawcett, who was one of the most persistent and able of the early speakers for the cause, had to face mockery and insults time after time; and only the strong force of her true conviction, and the saving comfort of her sense of humour bore her through the task. From 1867 until 1919 she carried on this campaign of education and propaganda, supported and helped by an increasing number of followers, and building up, as time went on, a vast organization of societies all over the country. All through these years she watched the political fortunes of the cause, taking advantage of every least opportunity, firmly steering it away from the snares of party politics, and basing it more and more securely upon its true foundation of national and international welfare. From the very first she cared intensely for its international side. All over the world, wherever there were women who shared any part of her ideal she was known and loved. When any little advance, or any great triumph, happened—in Greece, in India, in Tasmania, or anywhere—she was the first to whom it was told, the first to rejoice and sympathize, and the first to insist on its value everywhere else. Long before organized international conferences began, Mrs. Fawcett brought their spirit into the women's movement, and her death is mourned in every country under the sun.

The political struggle, of which she became the leader after 1884, gathered immense force and power in the early years of this century, and the history of its later stages and of its final triumph is well known. But, as she often said, its political victory would not have been possible, even with all the work of all its supporters, had not the other aspects of the movement made progress at its side. And to every one of these Mrs. Fawcett gave her help. It was in her drawing-room at Cambridge that the lectures which led to the foundation of Newnham College were first planned; and it was her daughter who silenced forever the doubts of women's mental equipment by beating the Senior Wrangler of her year. In the great campaigns of Josephine Butler, and the courageous work of W. T. Stead for the amendment of the Criminal Law, Mrs. Fawcett took her stand by their side, and to every aspect of the women's cause she gave help, wisdom, and support. She saw the end from the beginning, and she saw it in its widest terms, not as a gain to women only, but as a development of human liberty, and a far-reaching, beneficial change in the very structure of society. And when the new order began to come about, and the new generation began to grow up in conditions so far removed from those of her own youth, she ranged herself unhesitatingly on their side. "Your ways," she said to the young women of this generation, "are not the same as ours were. You will not have to ask and beg for what you think right, but can demand it, as free citizens. See to it that what you seek for is generous and just."

It is impossible as yet to measure the results of the movement she led so long, nor indeed is that movement yet ended. But it has gone far enough upon its way for us to estimate at least how great a thing it is. Other changes in the nature of human society there have been in the past which have been momentous. There have been revolutions and conquests, and the rise and fall of empires; constitutional government has grown up, and human slavery has been abolished. The emancipation of women ranks with these. Its success has not been won at the cost of human lives; it has not at one sweep built up or destroyed the outer fabric of the world; but it comes closer,

and more intimately home to mankind than any political change of them all. And Millicent Garrett Fawcett has been its leader.

RAY STRACHEY.

## THE TALE OF THE ROAD

MUNICH, July 29th, 1929.—At Munich, the motorist *en route* from London to Constantinople may reckon that he has put about one-third of his road behind him. He must not boast of that, for no doubt this is the tamest third—a third soon to be forgotten, or only to be remembered like some dream of a golden age, as he trundles through the middle third and labours through the last. Still, even this tame and gentle stage of the journey leaves some sharp impressions on his mind the day after it is done; and it seems only provident to take a pen and write them down quickly before they are blotted out by more sensational experiences in the *terra incognita* that lies beyond Vienna and Budapest.

When all our plans were made and all the prophets of evil had said their say, we sought consolation by looking up statistics of the number of inhabitants per car—or cars per inhabitant—in the different countries of the world. There was California, for instance, with cars enough to mount the whole population on wheels at one and the same moment if only there had been enough road-space for all the wheels to move along at the same time. Well, any way we were not going to California; and if Europe cannot boast of quite so many concrete roads, at least (we consoled ourselves) we should have room to drive on what roads there were; and the further East we went, the more we should have those roads to ourselves. Look at the statistics. France is the only Continental country that can at all compare with England. The rest are not in the running. Once across the Rhine we can pick our way between the ruts and pot-holes without having to worry about passing or being passed by other cars.

So we flattered ourselves, as we bumped over the pavé in French Flanders between clouds of push-bikes and over an infinite succession of level-crossings; and when we had left that country behind us at St. Quentin, it seemed too good to be true. From St. Quentin to Rheims, from Rheims to Metz, from Metz to the Vosges, it was the open road indeed; long straight avenues stretching away over hill and valley as far as the eye could see; and as far as the eye could see not another car in view. We burst three tyres by continuous speeding before we learnt the unwisdom of going full tilt just because there was no obstacle in the way.

These French roads were Roman in spirit, whether or not they really followed the track of roads which Roman engineers had first laid out. They gave one the feeling of some masterful Napoleonic mind setting its impress on the country according to its sovereign pleasure. That is how empire-builders drive their roads through "new countries" where there is nothing to say them nay; and indeed these French roads looked as though they were waiting for future generations to rise out of the earth and make traffic on them. Yet the curious thing was that all the places by the roadside were redolent of the past. As we drove through Arras in the dusk, the Corinthian columns in the nave of the baroque cathedral stood out like splintered bones through the gaps in the cathedral-wall. Along the straight road east of Rheims, the dismal plain, seen through the pelting rain of thunderstorms, was still all charged with the atmosphere of the war, as though November 11th, 1918, had been yesterday. Verdun stood



erect like an old warrior covered with honours and scars. It seemed as though the city only existed in order to be attacked and defended, and as though the surrounding hills had known no human action other than war. Metz rose up next like a trophy of victory; and all the road was strung with the names of sieges and battles, like some tattered regimental flag hanging in a church aisle: Valmy, Mars-la-Tour, Gravelotte, Phelsbourg, Saverne. France had been invaded and mutilated; France had been invaded and victorious; the lost provinces had been recovered; and that was the end of the story. The roads were built for the future, but the country was living in the past. . . .

When the spire of Strasbourg cathedral came in sight over the last spur of the Vosges, we parked our car by the roadside and started to picnic on the bank before dropping down into the city for the night. Well, if the French roads are as clear as that, how shall we find the German roads to-morrow? The words were in our mouths when hoosh, clatter, a great car came swinging round the corner at a speed which would have raised the hair on the head of any conscientious English driver; and then another and another; and then—O Lord, was this to be the end of our journey to Constantinople? For here was a great lorry coming up the hill and a great car coming down, and neither would give way to the other, and they were going to pass just where our car was standing. Would they crash into it? They missed it by a hair's breadth.

So this is Alsace, we said to ourselves. Well, one knows that the Alsations have plenty of life in them. After all, the French are finding them as bad to handle now as the Germans found them before. The local character evidently comes out in their driving. But to-morrow we shall be in Germany, and there the wicked will cease from troubling. . . .

Two days later we were picnicking by the roadside again, this time between Ulm and Angeburg; and the road was as populous as the Kingston by-pass. Not that the statistics of cars per head in Germany are wrong. There may not be many cars in Germany compared with France, but those that there are seem to be on the road all the time. And people who cannot afford to take the road in cars take it on motor-bicycles, or else on push-bikes (with a child or two on the handle-bars), or else on foot with rucksacks—men and women, young and old.

Here is a nation abounding with life and energy. The roads are more old-fashioned in Germany than in France. They wind as perversely as English roads, and are much narrower; and they are strung with towns and villages so ludicrously picturesque that they might have been built by Hollywood architects after an exhaustive study of Dürer and Cranach. Was not that Rottenburg that we crawled through just now? And was not that Tübingen? The places reek of the past, but the people belong to the future.

These "old-world" Swabian towns and villages do their best to make driving through Germany impossible. In each of them the road makes at least four turns at right angles round blind corners, often at a gradient of about one in four. And surely Lord Cecil must have been touring in these parts when he made his proposal to check the speed of English motorists by constructing periodical ridges and furrows across our English roads. For that is precisely what they do in Bavaria. Through the whole length of every village they deliberately leave the road unmended, so that even Jehu himself must needs slow down a little as he passes through. But it is all to no purpose. The German motorist speeds along as though his car were completely proof against jolts and jars. His cure-all is to sound his horn—and such horns! Our poor English horn is silenced by their bellowing. The little boys laugh at it as it

bleats through their streets. The first thing that we have done in Munich is to buy a great big "Bosch-Horn," in the hope that, when we take the road again to-morrow, we may begin to hold our own. . . .

This is the tale that the road has told us about Germany and France. What, we wonder, is it going to tell us about the countries that lie between Munich and Constantinople?

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

IT would be a good thing if we could have a freer interchange of speakers among the political parties. The visit of Mr. E. D. Simon to the Socialist Summer School is an example of what I mean. Most political speaking is cursed with futility because it is made to the converted. Audience and speaker are immersed in an enervating atmosphere of agreement—as Charles the Second remarked in another connection, "his nonsense suits their nonsense." Most Labour politicians have no notion—until they get into Parliament—what modern Liberalism is, or what a modern Liberal is like. They are content to go on repeating the stock phrase about there being no difference between a Liberal and a Conservative. Well, if there is no difference discernible between Mr. Simon and the average Tory, the latter must be a much more intelligent and progressive person than I had supposed. I imagine that after listening to Mr. Simon many of Mr. Maxton's followers must have revised their notions of Liberalism. They had come into contact with a man—a typical "scientific" Liberal—who is as sensitive to social suffering as they are, and thinks, with the best minds in his party, that Liberalism has a sounder remedy than Socialism to offer. This meeting showed also how wide and fruitful is the field which Labour and Liberalism can work together, if only the implacable doctrinaires can be restrained from setting the labourers by the ears.

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Mr. Simon usefully played the part of a missionary of Liberalism, but he also did the Socialists good in the character of a Socratic tester of phrases. What is Socialism? Is it anything specific—a fatal gulf not to be bridged by the two progressive parties, or is it not? This week's I.L.P. School has left the question as vaguely answered as ever. Is it equal distribution, the special fad of Mr. Shaw? Is it nationalization? Surely not: Liberals of the new school are nationalizers in principle—where it can be shown to be expedient and profitable, and even Mr. Maxton would not seriously quarrel with the limitation. The Socialism of British Labour, one is tempted to suppose is, as a doctrine, like the old Rupert's drop—Squeeze it with a little candid inquiry and it shatters into bits of unrelated doctrine. It is not even true that Socialists are more concerned with social suffering than Liberals. In short, I do not know what Socialism is if it is not a rather vague, but passionate and sincere resentment of social injustice. But that is no dividing line. Communism is another story. I agree; that is Socialism of a perfectly definite kind, but as every shade of Labour refuses to be compromised by it, we may leave it out of this discussion. My own belief is that our Left Wingers are in reality out simply for distributing the "surplus" wealth of the rich among the poor. We may leave Sir Josiah Stamp to deal with that.

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Our race, I sometimes fancy, is pre-eminent in the production of hale and pugnacious old men. Of our contemporary specimens, Mr. Shaw is surely the most hale as



he is the most pugnacious. No one who has seen him in action on the platform would believe that he is seventy-three. There must be something health-giving in the perpetual stimulus of the *contra mundum* attitude. Mr. Shaw characteristically spent part of his Bank-holiday in talking for an hour and three-quarters to the Independent Labour Party Summer School. Reckoning in answers to questions, Mr. Shaw was at it for two hours, at a speed that causes the cleverest shorthand writer to pant after him in vain. He was as fresh at the end as at the beginning; one felt that with (or without) the slightest encouragement he could have kept it up all day. Public-speaking seems to take it out of him no more than breathing, and yet one has known statesmen who needed a prolonged rest before and after a speech. What is more remarkable is that our readiest speaker is in many ways our best. It is all "good stuff," as the journalists say. I suppose that Mr. Shaw's address on Monday morning, printed verbatim, would fill nearly a page of the *Times*. It surprises me that our newspapers have not the intelligence to report him "in the first person": for here is good copy that costs nothing. The usual wooden summaries do not begin to do justice to this valiant mental pugilist as he dances round the ring of argument, flooring all the fools in the world with untiring zest.

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Mr. Shaw spared some three minutes in his two hours' spate of speech for a contemptuous dismissal of the Liberal Party. (I note, however, even Mr. Shaw admits that the Liberals are the victims of our stupid electoral system.) There are times when the scintillating common sense of Mr. Shaw seems inadequate. This was one of them. One really expects from him something better than the silly cliché he produced to explain Liberalism's fall from favour. It pleased the I.L.P. well enough to hear the great man talk of the Liberal Party as if it had never done anything effective since the days of Gladstone. It would hardly do to accuse Mr. Shaw of suffering from a lapse of memory. What he said is no more than the commonplace of Labour platforms, where an obstinately blind eye is always turned on the record of the Liberal Party in constructive social reform. Nothing is more remarkable in current political discussion than the success of the other parties in ignoring the record of the Liberals from 1906 to the war—certainly one of the most fruitful epochs of wise and radical changes in our history. It may be fashionable with the less intelligent Labour men to assume the identity of Liberalism and Conservatism, and I suppose that in these days filial gratitude is out of date in politics as in domestic life. But Mr. Shaw *must* know better.

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Another oddity of politics just now is the large amount of attention given to the Communists by speakers and writers compared with the actual insignificance of their achievements. Mr. Shaw has gone so far as to fix upon them the label of "bourgeois Conservatives": the most deadly abuse so far invented. The ludicrous result of the South Leeds election was greeted by disproportionate jubilation in the Labour Press. In Paris formidable preparations were made against a Communist rising—and the Communists stayed at home. The terror of Communism, which seems so irrational in comparison with the performances of Communists, may have deplorable effects. It throws the Labour Party into paroxysms of respectability, but what is worse, it is playing into the hands of reaction and suppression everywhere. The weapons that authority forges for use ostensibly against the Communists may be used against others some day, and the foolish fears that possess many people who ought to know better, may

be exploited to justify permanent encroachments upon liberty.

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No woman in our time was more fortunate than Dame Millicent Fawcett who died this week. "Mine has been a very happy life," was indeed a favourite saying of hers. She was happy in herself—in a singularly sweet and sunny temper that was proof against all the bitterness and violence of the suffrage controversy. I do not remember ever hearing an angry word from her lips. She was saved by an unfailing humour and charity. Her personality was the best refutation of the common gibe that public controversy has a deteriorating effect upon women. Mrs. Fawcett was so reasonable and cheerful always that her mere presence in the turmoil of agitation was reassuring. She was very much up to date in the cause she made her own, but there was something quaintly old-fashioned in her aspect and her precise gentle speech. She was justly regarded as the chief architect of women's political enfranchisement. She became famous, and she remained modest and unassuming as ever. I believe a great deal of friendly pressure was needed before she could bring herself to the egotism of writing her delightful memoirs. Hers was certainly a wonderful span of life. She began her work for the mental and political freeing of women in the heyday of Victorian restriction, and she lived to see all the barriers down in education and in politics—an achievement won by quiet persistence in putting a powerful case simply and fairly to the reason of her countrymen.

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I am glad to note the formation of a new society, with strong backing, with the object of trying to prevent "improvements" at Westminster Abbey, such as the notorious Sacristy. There is small doubt that the Dean and Chapter intend to proceed with this scheme, in spite of the large body of æsthetic opinion against it. The attempt to enlist the support of the Government which the opponents have made was bound to fail. I have no doubt Mr. MacDonald dislikes the project as much as anyone, but he is helpless. The Dean could pull down the West end of the Abbey if he liked, just as the authorities at St. Albans did years ago. This, as I have already argued, is an unsatisfactory state of things. I should like to see some form of State control over those precious national monuments, the great churches. On the merits of this case the Abbey authorities have clearly lost the day. No one is much impressed by the reasons of ecclesiastical convenience which are held to justify plastering a modern Gothic annexe upon the side of Westminster Abbey, and destroying a mediæval window in the process. The clergy have managed to appear at many elaborate ceremonies in the Abbey of late years, even though they had not the enjoyment of all the latest sanitary arrangements, or cupboards to store properly all their plate and vestments. (By the way, many less important churches are richer than the Abbey in fine old properties: few of the things there are older than the Restoration.) The only event that is likely to turn the Dean from his purpose now is an outburst of popular indignation. I suppose that if one could take the votes of the people in any train or tube on the scheme, there would be a big majority against tampering with the Abbey. Unfortunately there is no way of obtaining a popular verdict. In these matters people are lazily dumb until the time for protest has gone by.

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Mr. Epstein may be feeling grateful to Mr. Hardiman, the sculptor of the Haig statue, for giving our amateur critics something else to worry about (or, perhaps, he may not). There is an odd similarity between the reasons that stir indignation in the honest breasts of the newspaper

correspondents in the one case and in the other. Mr. Epstein the rebel is abused for his scorn of the proportions of nature; Mr. Hardiman, the traditionalist, for his neglect to give us a photographic reproduction of Lord Haig. In neither controversy does there seem to be, in the minds of most critics, the faintest realization of the commonplace that art has its own reality, its own truth. So we find colonels almost tearfully complaining that Haig would not have been seen riding such a horse; that his straps are all wrong, and more foolishness of that kind. So far as I can judge from the photographs, the Haig statue is, if not particularly inspired, at least a sound monumental work. The same people who abuse Mr. Hardiman's horse hold up for admiration the horse that King Charles rides at Charing Cross: the poor beast that used to move the late Mr. Walter Winans to periodical complaints in the *Times* that it had human eyes and so forth. One is forced to the conclusion that the only sort of sculpture that will satisfy some people is the art of Madame Tussauds, or, better still, the incomparable statues over the hosiers' shop at the corner of Tottenham Court Road—now, alas, abolished.

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ELECTORAL REFORM

SIR,—In answer to Mr. Rowntree's letter, I would like to point out that my objection to P.R. is mainly on account of its complications, particularly in scattered areas. If political education and means of communication improve as much in the next fifty years as in the last we shall be ready for P.R. in 1979.

At present, as a result of experience gained in political propaganda of the "doorstep" variety in both country and town, I fear that P.R. would be a stumbling block to vast numbers of the electorate. What "effective choice" will many a farm labourer have when faced with some twelve names on a voting paper? When he has identified the four candidates of the party for which he has a preference, he will be uncertain whether he likes A better than B, while C and D may be little more than names to him. If you make voting too complicated, electors will either spoil their papers or refuse to vote.

I would also like to make clear, that in my remark that P.R. would give safe seats to well-established members long after they had outgrown their usefulness, no reference was intended to party leaders. I was thinking of the County Council magnate or the Trade Union official rather than of men of Cabinet rank. These would often get votes simply because they had had long ago the chance of becoming very well known to a scattered electorate.

Both Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Crowther think that any "Three Vote System" is more complicated than the Alternative Vote. Personally I cannot admit this. The elector is used to putting one cross on his voting paper; all he would have to do now, would be to put two crosses by the name of his first choice and one by the name of his second. The count is straightforward, and on paper the principal change will be in the apparently heavy polls, since each elector will have three votes instead of one.

The claim that my system would give "the closest possible reflection of the mind of the constituency" seems to have provoked some criticism.

I am bound to say that in my opinion representation should imply the reflection of the will of the people, as far as it can be ascertained. I agree with Mr. Crowther that two motives would actuate the giving of the first and second preference (or the double and the single vote, as I should call it), the desire "to put A in" and the wish "to keep B out." I agree, too, that the first motive should have twice the weight of the second. That principle is embodied in my scheme.

But I contend that the Alternative Vote would give far more influence to the negative motive than my own scheme, in which all second preferences are counted.

As polling day approaches, in many constituencies it becomes fairly certain who is to be third man. A little group of Labour men in an agricultural or suburban area, a little group of Tories in a mining district in Wales know quite well where they will be when results come out. These small groups are often the "diehards" of their party, fighting forlorn hopes, and carefully disciplined by their officers. Under the Alternative Vote, these will use their second preferences for party reasons and not according to political principle, and these will hold the balance of power. In every such constituency the door will be opened to secret arrangements between two parties to defeat a third.

Now under my scheme where everyone knows that his second choice will count, there will be far less of this kind of thing. It is more difficult to drill large numbers, and impossible to discipline the "floating vote" of a constituency. No party manager will like to be too explicit in the advice he gives his followers, since he will be hoping for some second preferences from both opposing sides for his man. Thus a free second preference will become possible. The large numbers of non-party voters would effectively counteract the "plumping" of the party enthusiast.

As far as my model result is concerned, I chose a case where there was little difference between the number of votes given to A, B, and C under the present system. In those circumstances I still maintain that if the majority of the supporters of both A and B give C their second preferences, C, with his own good proportion of first preferences (or double votes) may easily be of the three candidates the most representative of the constituency.—Yours, &c.,

FRANCES M. PUGH.

Cheshunt, Babbacombe, Torquay.

July 29th, 1929.

## THE TRAGIC PICTURE

SIR,—The wisdom of Mr. Harris's policy for tropical Africa is as certain as the truth of Colonel Wedgwood's tragic picture of existing industrial conditions. But when are we to begin acting on that policy? In this matter, be it remembered, the Labour Party is deeply committed, not to any new and speculative political adventure, but to the revival of the policy the Whigs enforced ninety years ago. In Jamaica that policy has practically solved the whole African problem. What is needed is to apply the same solution to Africans in Africa.

Lord Passfield has made us his debtors for having sketched out, on paper, the outlines of our own constitutional development. No slight is intended. Plans have to be put on paper before they can be discussed and decided on. But he has now, at the age of seventy, accepted the responsibility and duties, so different from those of the interpreter of the past and the explorer of the future, of a man of action. In Kenya, the total sum paid by Africans in direct taxation, when divided by the number of able-bodied males, is thirty shillings. The standard wage rate is sixpence a day. The richest European in Kenya—and some are exceedingly rich—also pays thirty shillings in direct taxation, not a penny more. One other example. There are 1,400 Europeans in occupation of land in Kenya, and they have 8,000 square miles between them. But there are thousands of Africans with no land at all, and hundreds of thousands whose land is of no economic value, since most of the money spent on roads and railways is spent in the European areas. To no single one of these land-hungry natives has the Government granted a single acre.

These instances show that the situation in Kenya demands the services of a political surgeon rather than those of a political philosopher. Lord Passfield took office, presumably, knowing what his Party was pledged to. Will he direct that in Kenya the rich are taxed in proportion to their wealth and the taxation of the poor reduced? And will he direct the Government of Kenya to discover, by public inquiry and inviting applications, how many African



families there are in that country in need of land to cultivate?—Yours, &c.,

Brailsford, near Derby.

August 5th, 1929.

NORMAN LEYS.

### THE TENPENNY SHILLING

SIR,—If your correspondent "Twelve Pence" goes to a Post Office now with a £1 note he will get 240 penny stamps for it; were a tenpenny shilling introduced he would with the same note get only 200.

Again with telegrams at a penny a word he can send twelve words for a shilling, but with a shilling containing only tenpence he would only be able to send ten, or else have to pay twopence more to send twelve.

Would not all this be a considerable gain to the Post Office, and would it not act similarly and beneficially with all carrying companies whose receipts are largely in pence?

Priests and ministers of all denominations whose collections are in pence to a considerable extent should give the tenpenny shilling their support as they would only have to collect tenpence instead of twelve to give them a shilling. Of course, it is taxation, but then I was arguing for some alternative taxation to the income tax. The income tax is a just form of taxation as it places the burden on the strongest backs, but it is too high at 4s. in the £ and helps to keep down the price of the funds, and so militates against conversion of the huge 5 per cent. War Loan.

It would be better, I think, were the revenue not drawn so much from direct taxation, but the field widened so that all members of the community could and should contribute according to their means, and this, I think, would make for the greater safety and stability of the State: as taxpayers the people at large would not give a ready consent to expenditure proposed by their Government which might be totally unnecessary or ill-advised.

I presume from his signature that "Twelve Pence" is not in favour of the decimal system, but I am hopeful I may live to see it introduced one day and so bring us into line with the rest of the civilized world: the tenpenny shilling would make a good beginning.—Yours, &c.,

CHAS. ROBERTSON.

Batworth Park, Arundel, Sussex.  
August 3rd, 1929.

### THE DECLINE OF FICTION

SIR,—With reference to Miss Storm Jameson's interesting article, the decline of fiction as a branch of art seems to me to be due to the negative attitude of the modern novelist. The solid books with which the established writers yearly present us, as well as those highly praised works by the younger novelists, appear to me, as an ignorant reader, to be excellent presentations of nothing-at-all. I have not in the course of my reading come across a writer since Hardy who has attempted to draw living creatures as a whole, from a definite point of view.

The older novelists did not dive into any spiritual deeps; but the angle from which they observed was a fixed one, and their attitude was based on unshaken beliefs. Moreover, the life they described was sufficiently delightful to them to appear to the reader worth describing on its own merits. Nowadays we have got past all that. We can no longer believe, with Archdeacon Grantly and Mrs. Weston, that happiness consists in doing our duty and keeping in with the best county families. We do not believe in common everyday happiness at all, therefore life has no value unless there is a spirit which transcends it, and we are doubtful about that spirit. Thus a book like "Undertones of War" achieves a deeper reality than a novel, because it presents the spiritual experience of one mind; when it comes to presenting a number of minds, however, the writer must either ignore spiritual reality, or he must have attained certain spiritual standards himself by which he can measure life as a whole. To write autobiography one has only to be sincere; to write a novel one must also have a standpoint.

It is hardly surprising, in a world where the old faiths have been exposed, where one must either shut one's eyes and believe something unsatisfying, or be constantly con-

fronted with questions which one's beliefs do not answer; that the modern novelist has chosen either to stand and gasp, "What is it all for?" or to turn his back altogether on the deeper realities.—Yours, &c.,

B. L.

SIR,—It appears to me that Miss Storm Jameson is about as mistaken as she could be when she tells us that thoroughly to appreciate any piece of creative prose "it is as if we needed first to be assured that what we are reading was actually felt or thought or lived in action by a real person, the narrator or another, before we can accord it the deepest attention and respect of which our minds are capable." This way of approach is altogether false. Miss Jameson, indeed, is guilty of the critical error of going beyond the evidence. The evidence is always the piece of writing itself—whether it be poem, play or novel—that conveys to one directly a feeling of æsthetic satisfaction.

To wonder whether the series of events, feelings, or ideas has "actually" and historically occurred is as much beside the point as inquiring whether the painting one is admiring is a faithful record of a particular landscape. What does it matter whether it is, or is not? One obtains a definite experience from looking at it; and this experience is everything. To go behind it, making close inquiries as to its authenticity and literal accuracy shows a complete misconception of the nature of art.

What conceivable difference can it make to me to know that Anna Karenin or Tess have never "actually" existed? I have been much moved by what their creators have written—and there is an end to it. If a reader is influenced by such artistic hearsay as Miss Jameson would introduce, he at once shows that his enjoyment of the novel is insincere, or, at any rate, very shallow; certainly quite unimportant.

A novelist is an artist, not a reporter. An artist's imagination is a definite, creative entity. Miss Jameson appears to have overlooked this, and no amount of incoherent metaphysics and uninformed philosophical chatter about "symbols" and "higher reality" can conceal the fundamental fallacy on which her criticism is founded.—Yours, &c.,

RICHMOND H. HELLYAR.

Pitts Farm, Priddy, nr. Wells.

### MODERNIST POETRY

SIR,—Please call your reviewer's attention to a misstatement made in his review of my "Poems, 1929" that I am the author of "A Survey of Modernist Poetry." As announced in a foreword, this book was a word-by-word collaboration between Laura Riding and myself; except the last chapter, which was hers throughout.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT GRAVES.

Hammersmith.

### MR. ROGER FRY AND THE VICTORIANS

SIR,—The art master of the Victorian age comes in for Mr. Roger Fry's condemnation in his article on "Canaletto." The Victorian art master, says Mr. Fry, taught his pupils the "touch" for trees, and how to "do" various natural objects.

No doubt this art master was at fault in trying to teach his pupils by means of a formula rather than by the study of nature, but if the Victorian is to be ridiculed, why not the venerable Cennino Cennini of the early Italian school? He says: "If you wish to draw mountains well so that they may appear natural procure some large stones, rocky and not polished, and draw from these giving them lights and shades."

"When you have painted the trees black at the base, and also a few of the branches, let leaves shoot above, then put on the fruits and birds."

"Fish and irrational animals are generally dark on top and light underneath," &c., &c.

Except that the Victorian was probably more observant, there seems little to choose between them!—Yours, &c.,

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.

Marlborough.



## SO THIS IS MAJESTY!

**M**AJESTY is Up. It was not ever thus. The Conservative admirers of the Chamberlain family to-day are apt to forget that once their honoured Mr. Joseph combined with Sir Charles Dilke to lead a considerable party in the House of Commons advocating the Abolition of the Monarchy. In the spacious days of Queen Victoria, allusions to a Republic in a political speech might win applause. After the War crowns were falling like autumn leaves in a gale. To-day, however, we have changed all that. Kings are It. Mr. Bernard Shaw presents us with his king-hero in "The Apple-Cart." The illness of our own King George raised a spontaneous and profound emotion throughout the country. In a recent Press competition for the Most Popular Men in the World the Prince of Wales headed the list. When he turned up his trousers with a long dress-coat, tailors trembled. I have been told on good but not entirely reliable authority that on the morning after a Royal Garden Party last year, at which His Majesty had appeared without spats, the gardeners at Buckingham Palace discovered under the bushes three thousand odd of these superfluous garments, discarded by guests horrified at their sartorial solecism.

Certainly Kings are Up. Majesty matters. It may be because Democracy is Under Revision, if we are to believe Mr. H. G. Wells, though he has little use for kings either. It may be that the cult of the Strong Man is affecting us. It may be that in a democratic and informal age we are returning to Pomp and Ceremony, realizing that it satisfies some profound and inescapable hunger of our social nature. As men who have abandoned the ritual of the Church come back with whetted appetites to the ritual of Free Masonry, so we, tired of looking at the Men in the Street, of whom there are so many, and who are, on the whole, so plain, contemplate Monarchs with renewed refreshment. Majesty and its Nature have become matters of importance to us.

I suppose that for many years I harboured subconsciously the knowledge that Majesty depended in some measure on its accessibility, but I had accepted it as one accepts other self-evident and universal truths, such as that one's mother's sisters are one's aunts, or that Monday follows Sunday, or that lemons are sourer than bananas. Accessibility does not mean familiarity. Shakespeare considered that familiarity breeds contempt for Majesty.

"The skipping King, he ambled up and down,  
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,  
Soon kindled and soon burnt; carded his state  
Mingled his royalty with capering fools . . .  
Enfeoff'd himself to popularity;  
That, being swallow'd by men's eyes,  
They surfeited with honey and began  
To loathe the taste of sweetness."

This, of course, will not do. It is said that Louis Philippe lost France because, Louis XIV. having governed her with a sceptre and Napoleon I. with a sword, he tried to govern her with an umbrella; and the nation became bored.

But if Majesty must be glorious it must also be unflustered. The head that wears a crown must not appear uneasy to the populace. Louis XIV. protested too much his royal grandeur, and has been accused of an inferiority complex by modern biographers. The essence of modern Majesty lies in that unquestioning assurance which permits informality.

All this came upon me suddenly when to-day I followed the instructions of a society to which I belong, climbed into a taxi, and told the driver to take me to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Downing Street. I had a presentiment that the address would impress him. Like

most of my presentiments, this was wrong. I had a feeling that a taxi would give me courage to face the Majesty of Imperial Law in Action. One has so much more confidence when stepping out of a taxi in one's best hat than in stumbling off a bus in one's second best. The feeling was right. The taxi did.

I drove into Downing Street, and paid the taxi-man 1s. 3d. outside a door on which was painted clearly and conveniently "Judicial Committee." I felt the name ought not to be so clear; that identification should not be quite so easy. Downing Street itself always seems to me almost indecently undressed without its barricade. I feel about an open Downing Street as the proprietor of the Southampton Row Restaurant felt about Mr. A. J. Cook in his Shirt Sleeves; it should appear more formally clothed. I climbed the steps with a faint disapproval in my mind. I found a bare stone hall, not too clean, devoid, I at first thought, of those appropriate Guardians of the peace who exist to expel importunate deputations and the like. Then I saw in a telephone box on my right a perfectly ordinary porter, wiping a perfectly ordinary forehead while apparently enduring the perfectly ordinary exasperation which afflicts telephone subscribers when put on to the wrong number.

He cocked an inquiring, but amiable, eye at me. "Is the Edwards case still going on?" I murmured. "The Canadian Case?" I expected him to ask what I wanted with the Canadian Case, who I was, on what authority, where was my passport, birth certificate, marriage licence if any, &c., &c., &c. Not at all. "Up those stairs to the right, along the corridor to the room at the end, and walk straight in." "But is there a name on the door or anything?" I stammered, picturing myself bursting in suddenly upon the Privy Council in Session, or the Lord Chancellor drinking afternoon tea, or something equally awful and private. "No—can't mistake it. Just walk straight in. Hello! Hello! Hello! Yes, I said Gerrard . . ."

I walked upstairs. They were dirty stairs. I said to myself, "I am an ordinary citizen. I might not even be a British subject for all they know or care. I am going to see a meeting of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council discussing the Appeal of Five Canadian Women to know whether in the British North American Act Women are to be considered Persons. This is the highest imperial court of appeal, discussing a question that may have a profound effect upon imperial history . . . and it is more accessible than a police court hearing a deserted wife's application for maintenance allowance." I found a swing door. It swung. I saw a notice. "Committee in Session. Enter by the side doors." I entered. I found myself in a pleasant looking room, the size of a largish dining-room in a country house, and having the same smell of leather, English gentlemen and old, old dust. Books and portraits covered the walls; chairs with soft leather seats stood round them; an elderly clerk with a white beard, a young man with pince-nez, a vaguely affable porter person, and one woman sat on the chairs. These were the Public, the *οἱ πολλοί*, the Commonalty of the Realm. Beyond the chairs was a low partition, rather like the bar in a buffet, but covering books instead of bottles. And within the bar. . . .

Within the bar was Majesty—the Majesty of the Law, the Realm, the Empire. At a table facing the entrance lounged four or five pleasantly somnolent and elderly gentlemen. The face of the central one was familiar to me. I had seen it in dozens of caricatures and photographs. In front of the table lolled more gentlemen, this time in wigs,

little, curly, lamblike barristers' wigs, and wearing black gowns. They had papers before them. One large dark gentleman stood facing the top table, clutching his gown as though his cause depended on his decency. He was speaking, but his voice was so soft that I, stricken with awe and wonder, could not make out his words. "Baa. Baa, Baa," seemed to emerge appropriately from those nodding curls. "Baa, baa, baa," bleated the other placid sheep.

Nobody forbidding me, I sat down on one of the vacant chairs. On another I put my bag, my gloves, my blue parasol (they did not even ask us to give up our umbrellas here as at other public shows.) I began to distinguish words. "M'lud. M'lud. The constitution. . . . If the meaning of this word is changed, might not a precedent be set for altering the sense of any other word in the Constitution of Canada? My learned friend . . . not an anomaly that women should be permitted to sit in the Lower House yet not in the Senate in Canada, since in the Imperial Parliament. . . . No woman member of the House of Lords . . . in Canada, membership of the Senate gives the right to be a Privy Councillor."

Here one of the gentlemen at the top table stirred in his slumber. "Ah—I believe—er—women are members of the Privy Council in this country." They are. They are, my mind affirmed, marvelling how Law follows the act, as Trade, they say, follows the flag. The Concrete does not invariably precede the symbolic.

I had missed something. . . . "Dicey on the Privy Council." "A little book," said the bewigged gentleman. "Written when he was very young." Dicey must have been indiscreet, thought I. Perhaps he gave reason to believe that women might be persons—a youthful indiscretion and a little one, as in the lady's classic apology for her baby. "But we have passed—a—er—Sex Disqualification er—Act." We have. We have. Authority at the Top Table questioned. "When was the Sex Disqualification Removal Act passed?" I knew that. I knew something apparently unknown to Majesty. I longed to cry from the house-tops my superior knowledge. I longed to shout that Majesty was sleepy, stupid, lounging, uninstructed, inadequate, and slow, that it baa'd like a sheep, that it was as unimpressive as a wet washing day. But could I? I could not.

For this, without any possibility of doubt, was Majesty. Accessible, casual, separated from the populace by the pretence of a bar, drawling, indifferent, this was yet the highest Imperial Court of Appeal. Its very carelessness proclaimed its dignity. I remembered that those who would see the Editor of the DAILY EXPRESS or the Manager of a London Music-Hall have to make elaborate appointments, to be handed from clerk to clerk, from office boy to office boy, to approach nearer and ever nearer to the Presence till their hearts beat to suffocation point. Yet I could imagine myself snubbing the Manager of a Music-Hall. I could even imagine myself contradicting an editor. But before this accessible, negligent confidence of Majesty, I was abashed.

For here were men so confident of their importance that they had forgotten it. Here was a court whose actions were so far-reaching that they were dull. Here was a tradition so revered that it could be yawned through, drawled through, lolled through without losing its power, tradition as venerable as the ritual of the Catholic Mass which loses nothing from the matter-of-fact impatience of a droning priest or scurrying server. I went away much edified, saying to myself at last, "So This is Majesty."

WINIFRED HOLBY.

## THE RUSSIAN FILM

### I.

THIS spring the London Film Society presented three Russian films: the "Mother," the "End of St. Petersburg," and "Bed and Sofa." They caused a mild sensation. At one point during one film the cheering and counter-cheering between opposing political enthusiasts appeared to be on the verge of seriousness. As was to be expected, a reporter of a sensational newspaper, made copy out of hostility to the performances. Sir William Joynson-Hicks was asked a question in Parliament, and after he had assured the House of Commons that everyone at the exhibition of the films stood up when the orchestra played "God Save the King," an impression was created that the delicate problem of releasing Russian films had been laid quietly to rest. Indeed, there were but few signs that anyone was bothering at all about them. Some excited film critics from extreme Labour newspapers tried to lash up an interest among their weakling followers; but the ordinary film critic, alive, perhaps, to the fact that he had come into contact with a phenomenon that he did not understand, was content to write glibly and superficially of his experience, and to leave the matter there. Some attempts, mainly abortive, were made to show Russian films privately elsewhere. Later the daily newspapers published paragraphs announcing that arrangements had been made with a big British film syndicate to release Russian films in some form or another at some time or another. The election followed, and political enthusiasm was transferred elsewhere; finally the craze for talkies began to flash across the headlines and to absorb public interest to the exclusion of all other film news.

### II.

England is now almost the only country in Europe in which some of the most important Russian films have not yet been generally released. In England, therefore, almost nobody knows what is the nature of these films or in what senses they differ from films made in other countries. Nor is it by any means an easy matter for one who has seen a number of Russian films to describe what he has experienced to those who have seen none of them.

In the first place it is essential to rid oneself altogether of impressions of the "pictures" based upon acquaintance with American, German, or French films. There is nothing pretty, nothing frivolous, nothing commercial, about the Russian film; the Russian film industry has, up to now, been a thing quite apart from any other kind of film industry. Outside Russia, its ancestors are Mr. D. M. Griffith's early epic films "Intolerance" and the "Birth of a Nation"; inside Russia, its foster parents are Lenin, who saw in the cinema a means of inspiring the inarticulate Russian masses with a belief in their own power, and Pavlov who placed his laboratory for the recording of reflex actions at the disposal of the Russian film producers.

Under the direction of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, nurtured by Lenin and Pavlov, the modern Russian film has become a national art and national religion, as intimately connected with the State as the Mediæval Church was connected with the Mediæval State. Its functions are to educate the masses and to formulate emotional beliefs according to the political ideals of U.S.S.R. By means of extensive national resources, co-ordinated by a fanatical religious belief in Communism and the inherent virtues of the masses, the Russian film producers have managed to develop the film as an art and an instrument of what we term "propaganda," to a perfection quite beyond the imagination of those who have only seen films prepared for



the American or European commercial market. Everything the directors of this national religious industry have needed has been placed at their disposal. The Russian film producer can select a woman from the fields or in the factories and turn her into an actress; when her part is done he may send her back to her home; he need not spend money upon "boosting" her as a star or upon maintaining her reputation when she has been boosted. For backgrounds to his films the whole of Russia is at his disposal—Moscow and Leningrad, their bridges, palaces, highways and waterways, the Steppe wastelands and the wheatfields of the Ukraine. Films so made are quite free from the atmosphere of artificial acting; their backgrounds never give the impression that they have been temporarily knocked up by a garden city carpenter. The Russian film is the people's, and the people act in it, anonymously, as they appear in everyday life. This close relationship of the film to real life as opposed to the life of the theatre, this attempt to subordinate the function of the actor, and to make him part of a dynamic background of real life, is an essential part of the force of the Russian film.

### III.

One cannot escape from the force of a Russian film; its concentration is terrific; its purposiveness, relentless and fanatical. To this and to symbolizing impersonal "power" (so peculiarly a mystic property shared by religion and the cinema) every available psychological, cinematographic, and musical device is employed. Never a moment of rest is permitted. There is no poise. By inserting between short dramatic themes, cynical sub-titles and rapid stills, something which the technicians term "tempo" is achieved; but this is not done to provide relaxation; it is designed to heighten excitement; by it only just enough contrast is introduced to maintain the impression that one is hypnotized on the summit of a grand crescendo. The music, especially written for each film, provides a sort of noise accompaniment, to each individual incident. The action of the music seems to form an inseparable part of the action of the film; each is as much a part of the main theme as the piano and orchestra in a grandiose concerto by Liszt. Indeed, there is more than a little of the Slav tone poems in these Russian films; all of them reveal an irresistible delight in sustained, brilliant, chaotic emotionalism. This characteristic is far more obvious in the splendid settings of Eisenstein than in the puritan earnestness of Pudovkin, whose moral solemnity tends to disguise his incidental technique, the sense of unity and of continually tightening rhythm which makes his films both poetry and "propaganda."

A Russian film lasts, at this high pitched tension, for at least an hour and a quarter. Those who see it, unless they seize their hats and umbrellas and barge their way along a row of gaping sycophants, become, for the time being, passive recipients of a series of shrewd, calculated, and insistent blows. They are held, helplessly, under the spell of wizards of the film who produce "new" magic with an awful scientific nicety. In the short space of an hour and a quarter the passive audience is made to traverse the best part of Russia and the best part of the last ten years of its history. Everything is seen through the red spectacles of Bolshevism, beautifully polished in Professor Pavlov's psychological laboratory so that every vestige of a chance of a blur is removed. During this strange hour and a quarter one's heart is made to throb in the body of that conglomeration of unidentified humanity, the mass, in the full white heat of its red fervour.

We are compelled, willy-nilly, to move with it; to worship its strange idols, to destroy its strange devils, to be chased by its strange noises. Violent contrast rapidly overtakes violent contrast. We see the Great War in terms of big-bellied financiers clamouring greedily for extra pennies of interest; in terms of misled, duped workers struggling like drowning rats in the flooded trenches of the Western Front. We watch, at one moment, wet, hungry women sleeping in all-night queues in the hope that they will get a quarter of a pound of bread the next day or the day after, and, at another moment, the remnants of the painted, uniformed *bourgeoisie* for ever embracing each other in the heedless atmosphere of waterside picnics. Then in a flash we are with Lenin, disguised in the streets of St. Petersburg, or arguing in a cellar meeting of a secret Bolshevik society in Moscow. On the screen there is no time for "visions and revisions," and the music sweeps us on in a state of riotous, intoxicated, submission. We jeer at the Provisional Government of Karenski; at the inane vanities of his regiment of women; at the society for the preservation of ancient buildings. The compromise attitude of the Mensheviks seems weak-kneed and futile; who would play a harp when there is blood to be shed, power to be gained? We are with the mob, with them we recapture the bridges, invade the Winter Palace, and with them we lift our own voices as Lenin rises to address the first triumphant meeting of the masses. At this point, or at some similar point, Russian films come to a standstill. It is then that those who value their own sanity and take pleasure in a sense of their differentiation from other human beings seek a cold bath.

### IV.

It is difficult, and beside the point of this article, to estimate the value of these films as political propaganda outside Russia; they do not appear to have caused riots in the places where they have been shown in Central Europe or elsewhere. What is interesting about them is the extraordinary technical difficulties the producers have overcome in order to create a new art-form of their own. These achievements seem to be inseparable from the political earnestness of the producers—no other films possess the tremendous unity which is characteristic of Russian films. Beside them other films, with a few exceptions, appear weak and artificial, always straining after effects to which the camera does not perfectly adapt itself. I have not seen a Russian film which contained even a minor technical mistake; yet all English films, and all but a few French and German films contain crude æsthetic blunders.

The secret is, I think, that this fanatical religious belief in the power of the State over individual human beings is very suitable to cinematographic expression. By subordinating dramatic values the Russian film has done something more than free itself from the stage conventions which hamper cinematographic development elsewhere. The Russian film producers have created a real film personality out of the impersonal qualities of the Russian State. They have given the State attributes which satisfy certain needs in their audience, much in the same way as primitive people give to their gods attributes which are really expressions of their own needs. That the needs of the Russian people happen, on occasions, to be somewhat primitive is not to the point. It is the religious relationship which makes the Russian film powerful socially; it is the development of an extraneous semi-mystical character controlling the development of action which makes it significant in the history of the cinema.

R. G. RANDALL.



## PLAYS AND PICTURES

## "The Speyg," Arts Theatre.

**T**HE SPEYG" (Society for providing experience to young girls), by A. D. George (which has just been produced at the Arts Theatre), reveals an author with a genuine gift for comedy. The hero is a twentieth-century Blue Beard who married eight girls in succession, that they may learn to choose wisely with experience. He hands them on to new lovers, and finally they are dismissed to happiness. When all are satisfactorily married, the Speyg is closed down, while the hero, who is clear-sighted only where others than himself are concerned, at last finds happiness where he least expects it. The situation is entertaining in itself, and the dialogue is often most felicitous. Mr. George is not yet as good at farce as he is at comedy, while the last scene, that of realization (in the Aristotelian sense) is rather *boulevard* and sham profound. Still, when all is said and done, "The Speyg" is far more amusing than nine plays out of ten, and should have considerable success if put on for a run. Mr. Franklin Dyall gave a most elegant performance as a humanitarian Blue Beard.

## "Bees and Honey," New Theatre.

"Bees and Honey," by Mr. H. F. Maltby (at the New Theatre), might have been more amusing if it had been differently produced. There was so much noise and general heartiness that the nerves became sadly jangled. Also Mr. Clifford Mollison is too gentle a comedian to lend himself well to such knockabout methods. The theme, however, was not without genuine moments of comedy. An impoverished earl, in order to raise money, asks down a millionaire and a young American lady of vast wealth. Naturally these two immediately take up together, and with the characteristic thoughtlessness of the rich put the earl to a great deal of additional expense. Needless to say, however, all comes right in the end. The strange methods employed by the producer prevented any acting of distinction. Mr. Allan Aynesworth as a super-butler played the part with a virtuosity that was in danger of becoming mechanical.

## "The Tiger in Men," Adelphi Theatre.

The best *raison d'être* I can adduce for this play is that someone found in the property room of the theatre an old pair of gloves. Theatrical gloves, of course, are made for insulting people with. Adelphi melodrama being out of date, the setting was changed to the more fashionable Tropics, and Miss Margaret Bannerman was measured for a nice new pair of explorer's breeches, to match the gloves. She then collected, by means of insults, a sort of Salvation Army platoon of four—an American gambler, a French dope-fiend, an English drunkard, and a guttural thief. Their lives all being utterly useless, she considered them the most suitable assistants for a tin-mining expedition into the jungle. Arrived there, they all proceeded to fall in love with her and reform each other. I forget whether they found the tin they were looking for, but Morality is what matters, and Morality wins all along the line. The conventions, I am glad to say, were strictly observed, and Miss Bannerman wore the choicest pair of jungle bedroom slippers. Apart from its supreme ingenuousness, the play suffers chiefly from the fact that there are practically no "situations," or rather that the one situation which is laboriously led up to in the first act is not developed. But there is a first-rate homily on the ethics of poker, in the course of which Miss Bannerman remarks, "I may play a good game of poker, but after all I am really a woman." Messrs. Ian Hunter (Englishman), Alexander Clark (American), Dion Titheradge (Frenchman—also the author), and Phil White (guttural) tried hard to be human beings, but all the time I could not help suspecting that they were really actors.

## "The Skin Game," Wyndham's Theatre.

This is a revival of Mr. Galsworthy's tragi-comedy, with Mr. Nicholas Hannen as *Hillcrist*, Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis as his wife, and Mr. Edmund Gwenn as *Hornblower*.

## "King—of the Khyber Rifles," New Gallery Cinema.

The new talking picture "King—of the Khyber Rifles" is a strange mixture of good serious passages with incidents of more than ordinary absurdity. The story opens at the Black Watch Officers' mess in August, 1914; the regiment is on the point of departure for Flanders, when Captain King is sent for to the War Office and ordered to proceed to India on a secret mission. All this part of the film is surprisingly well done. Great trouble has evidently been taken to get the detail correct, and (apart from the strong American accent of the mess sergeant and one of the subalterns) the military scenes, including the entrainment of the troops, are very convincing. It is with the arrival of Captain King at the north-west frontier and his entry into a sort of Rider Haggard intrigue that the film becomes ludicrous. He has been sent to prevent an army of wild frontier tribesmen from starting a "holy war" and descending upon India. These tribesmen are hidden in secret caves in the mountains (where they employed blinded British soldiers as slaves) and are led by a descendant of Alexander the Great, a lady called Yasmani, whom they worship as a goddess. After a great many difficulties Captain King's mission is crowned with success, but not before he has succumbed to Yasmani, who dies in his arms. Mr. Victor McLaglen struggles manfully to give some idea of Captain King as a human being, but it seems unlikely that a descendant of Alexander the Great, bred on the Afghan frontier, should either look, speak, or behave like Miss Myrna Loy. The special holiday programme at the Stoll Picture Theatre this week includes the "talkie" "Through Different Eyes."

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, August 10th.—

Promenade B.B.C. Concerts begin, Queen's Hall, 8.

Monday, August 12th.—

"The Middle Watch," by Mr. Ian Hay and Commander Stephen King Hall, at the Shaftesbury.

Tuesday, August 13th.—

"Fighting the Waves," by Mr. W. B. Yeats, at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

OMICRON.

## VILANELLE—IN THE TUBE

WHILE in Tubes the people sit  
They adopt a stolid air,  
Nod a bit and sway a bit.

And the others opposite  
Solemnly return the stare,  
While in Tubes the people sit.

On the walls are legends writ,  
Rival posters flaunt and flare,  
Nod a bit and sway a bit.

"Smoke Abdullas," "Do not spit,"  
"Use Amami for the hair,"  
While in Tubes the people sit.

Stations come, and people quit,  
Strangers take their places there,  
Nod a bit and sway a bit.

Goes the train all brightly lit  
Like a dragon to his lair,  
While in Tubes the people sit,  
Nod a bit, and sway a bit.

DIANA CARROLL.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING has a very considerable reputation as writer, philosopher, and prophet. His "Travel Diary of a Philosopher" and "Europe" are two books which have received praise both high and wide. His School of Wisdom at Darmstadt is apparently a flourishing institution. One must therefore welcome the publication in an English translation of "Creative Understanding" and "The Recovery of Truth" (Cape, 25s. each), for it is to these two books that anyone who wants to understand his doctrines must go. The seeker after the truth according to Count Keyserling finds that he has embarked upon a formidable undertaking. There are 500 pages in "Creative Understanding" and 647 in "The Recovery of Truth," and they contain some of the stiffest reading that I have ever met with. After reading 263 pages of "Creative Understanding" with the greatest difficulty of understanding Count Keyserling's meaning, I was taken aback by his remark "*Clarity is our goal.*" Whatever other goal Count Keyserling may have reached, he certainly has not reached that of clarity, at any rate in his English or American translation; it would be difficult to think of any books more obscure or written more obscurely. That is not necessarily a ground of complaint; Count Keyserling's subject may be so obscure and difficult that it is impossible to write with clarity about it. But it is really amusing to find that his aim is clarity! For there is not much more clarity in the last 220 pages of "Creative Understanding" than there is in the first 263.

\* \* \*

The author of this book is obviously a man of intelligence, knowledge, and imagination. It is clear, from the history of his School of Wisdom, that he has the dangerous quality sometimes called a "magnetic personality." His theories or doctrines are by no means without interest, and in the course of his enormously voluble exposition he says some illuminating things, and many which provoke that rare activity, thought. His good faith and sincerity are, of course, unimpeachable. Yet he must be reckoned as belonging to the typically modern school of historical philosophers or philosophical historians, the school of Spengler and Steiner and the host of lesser prophets who, in perfect good faith, purvey their quack medicines to a muddled and puzzled world. Herr Spengler and Count Keyserling are the most distinguished, the most formidable, and the most characteristic examples of this school of thought. They belong to the ancient profession of medicine-man, sage, seer, oracle, or prophet, and the fact that they talk the language of the twentieth century A.D. instead of the second B.C. is not very important. In one hand they offer us a metaphysical panacea and in the other a powder to solve all cosmic riddles; in one pocket they carry a key to unlock the mysteries of the universe and in another a key to unlock the mysteries of human history and the human soul. They are intellectual and dialectic with a thoroughness and completeness that are only found in the educated German, and the views which they put forward in their immense works are supported by a stream of complicated, dialectical, logical argument which reminds one of the most sophistical of the Socratic dialogues, of Aristotle's "Metaphysics," of the mental gymnastics of the schoolmen, or of Godwin on political justice. Yet these dialecticians are continually

preaching by their dialectic that dialectic can achieve nothing (Count Keyserling, who is cleverer than Spengler, it is true, is careful to guard himself by always having it both ways), and proving by logic that it is not logic or reason, but some mysterious form of "intuition" which opens the door to all profound truths.

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Count Keyserling's cosmic panacea is what he calls Significance, and the peculiar non-rational part of the mind by which we are to apprehend it he calls Sense-perception. What this terrific thing, Significance, is we are never told, nor what exactly this curious Sense-perception is. But every now and then, when Count Keyserling does really take one of his cosmic rabbits out of his conjuror's hat and put it on the table in full view of his audience, one is astonished and embarrassed to see what a tiny little creature the beast is. For instance, after working us up for 300 pages to a state of ecstasy at the supreme importance of Significance and the tremendous results of apprehending it by Sense-perception, we are given an example. "If one desires to direct Life," we are told, "one must *anticipate Significance*" (the italics are Count Keyserling's). The man who does this "transmutes dependence on destiny into determination of destiny; he directs forces which would otherwise direct him." For instance—and here comes the rabbit—the Significance of Socialism is "the idea of a new form of the eternal ideal of solidarity which is in harmony with the spirit of the age, including both the economic and the juridical side of Life," and if you understand that, not only will you be above the Social Democratic Party and all Socialist programmes, but you will triumph over dialectics, transmute dependence on destiny into determination of destiny, and "create an adequate embodiment for the Significance (you have) more profoundly understood." Now there is one word in Count Keyserling's definition of the Significance of Socialism, and only one word, to which I really take exception, the word "eternal." It is the stock word of the philosophical mystery- and oracle-monger; it makes the whole sentence much more impressive, but means nothing. I am not quite certain what "the juridical side of Life" (with a capital L) exactly means, but the Keyserling-Spengler school always write in this kind of jargon, the meaning of which one can understand not precisely, but vaguely. But, subject to these two qualifications, it is obvious that practically every intelligent Conservative, Liberal, and Socialist who is not a mere party hack has understood the meaning of the Socialistic idea in this sense, and has been in possession of the Count's rabbit long before he produced it from his hat after all this metaphysical patter. Yet none of the wonderful results predicted by Count Keyserling can be observed to have accompanied the possession of this particular significant rabbit. These intelligent gentlemen seem to be quite unable to determine destiny or to direct forces rather than to be directed by them. Many of them are members of political parties, and some I know are hopeless dialecticians. And how many of them, I wonder, have created an adequate embodiment for the Significance they have more profoundly understood?

LEONARD WOOLF.



## REVIEWS

## A TRIBE IN THE MIDDLE WEST

Middletown. A study in contemporary American culture. By ROBERT S. LYND and HELEN MERRELL LYND. (Constable. 18s. 6d.)

THE authors of this book had the excellent idea of studying a modern American community as an anthropologist studies a savage tribe. With three assistants they spent some eighteen months on field-work in a city in the Middle West, with a population of about 38,000. They collected a mass of information, much of which they present in statistical form, about the conditions and habits of mind of the natives. In Middletown (the pseudonym given to the particular city studied) ways of life have changed with great speed, and part of the inquiry is devoted to information about conditions in 1890. Their report is divided into six parts dealing with the major activities of man, whether in Chicago or in the Andaman Islands: Getting a Living, Making a Home, Training the Young, Using Leisure in various forms of Play, Art, and so on, Engaging in Religious Practices, Engaging in Community Activities. Americans themselves, the authors had the advantage over most anthropologists of not being treated as foreigners, and of understanding the language perfectly. There was, however, a corresponding disadvantage, the difficulty, that is to say, of being completely objective, and of perceiving the peculiarity of habits in which they had themselves been brought up. This they have done their best to overcome. They are evidently radical in their opinions—no Rotarian would undertake such an enterprise—but their criticism remains implicit, and they have indeed been extremely self-denying in face of the most tempting opportunities for satire. Their book, which is long and thickly packed with information, collected from both oral and written sources, is remarkably free from cackle. It makes fascinating reading, and can be recommended not only to the sociologist and anthropologist, but to everyone interested in the world which we inhabit.

To a visiting anthropologist from Utopia many features of Middletown life would seem as strange as anything known of the Ashanti. The smallest families live in the largest houses, for instance, and unemployment in the building trade co-exists with a housing shortage. These peculiarities of the capitalist system are so familiar that most people are blind to them. Similarly an intelligent Zulu would, no doubt, be shocked both by the stupidity of the rules governing sexual life, and by the extent to which they are clandestinely disregarded. An Englishman, in turn, is naturally struck by the habits which most differentiate Middletown from an industrial town of similar size in this country. In some respects Middletown belongs to a more advanced—I do not say better—civilization than ours: in others, the contrary is true. Class-distinctions are less varied, though their fluidity gives them an even greater rôle. The investigators eventually decided that it was necessary only to draw one line, that between the "working" and the business or professional classes. No upper class exists. In spite of all we hear of the prosperity of the United States only 15 per cent. of those earning the city's living reported incomes of over \$1,000, if single, or over \$2,000, if married (\$1,922 is the minimum standard for a family). Allowance made for those who evade taxes, for small families, and for families with several wage-earners, half the community seems to live on less than the income officially declared necessary for health and decency. Moreover, there are no Old Age Pensions, less free medical attention than in England, and, as far as I can discover, no provision for unemployment which is frequent. On the other hand, two out of every three families own a motor-car and some 46 per cent. of families live in houses which they own themselves, though mortgages often make their ownership nominal. Only two-thirds of the houses are connected with the city sewers, only three-quarters of them with the water-supply, yet in many of the others there are electric washers. The demand for motor-cars has outstripped that for earlier and perhaps more valuable inventions. A Ford is more valued than a bathroom. Several working women stated that in bad times they preferred to do with less food rather

than without their motor, and an unemployed artisan wandering about the countryside in a Ford looking for a job appears a common spectacle. The motor has as rivals the radio-set, the gramophone, and the movies, but it has replaced gardens, and walking for pleasure is unknown. The country round Middletown is unattractive, so that walking and motoring are in one respect equally depressing.

Only a very small proportion of workers can look for promotion or better wages: most of the work is unskilled, and many factories dismiss their employees at the age of forty-five. On the whole, the working classes do not sound very much more happily placed than they are here, but they seem better able to achieve their almost universal desire, which is that their children should enter the bourgeois class. For this reason there appears to be little unrest in Middletown. One chapter in the book is headed: "Why Do They Work So Hard?" The introduction of machinery has multiplied some twenty times the production of a worker, yet most of them still work over fifty-five hours a week. This fact might well bewilder the visitor from Ashanti, until he learnt that profits go largely to citizens of other towns, and that the creation of demands has been brought to a fine art in the United States. Advertising seeks "to make the reader emotionally uneasy, to bludgeon him with the fact that decent people don't live the way *he* does." The result is dissatisfaction, but the richer classes excite emulation rather than envy.

The bourgeois does less work than the worker and gains more money, but he has many anxieties. He is even more dominated than members of the proletariat by the herd-spirit, and even in his leisure has to remember the demands of his job. He must play golf, vote Republican, and applaud exuberantly the Basket Ball matches, or his credit will suffer at the bank. He must support the churches, though he need not attend them. Political life, if he is normally honest, he will avoid: the administration of the city is left to professional rogues. But highly organized municipal patriotism obliges him to be a "booster." He must believe that he lives in the most progressive city in the finest country in the world. Popularity with his fellows is the principal ambition held out to him from his earliest days, and his livelihood depends upon his prestige, but he is wise to avoid intimate friendships—they are a treachery to the tribe.

About half the marriages contracted in Middletown end in divorce, cruelty being the usual excuse, and finance the usual motive. Almost all the business class use contraceptives, but apparently less than half the working class. Religion is more social than individual, but occupies a more important place in Middletown than it does in an English town of the same sort. The ministers preach a Christianity which has become the religion of Increased Production: Christ is the first Rotarian, the greatest salesman the world has ever known. Middle-aged lawbreakers are occasionally sentenced, not to prison, but to attendance at church and abstinence from tobacco.

It is rare for a male in Middletown to read a book: culture, like embroidery, is a feminine activity. "Woman," says Miss Dorothy Dix, a publicist whose word is gospel in the Middle West, "Woman makes the family's social status. The old idea used to be that the way for a woman to help her husband was by being thrifty and industrious. Now such a woman is a hindrance. A man's wife is the show-window where he exhibits the measure of his achievement. The biggest deals are put across over luncheon-tables. We meet at dinner the people who push our fortunes. The woman who cultivates a circle of worth-while people, who belongs to clubs . . . is a help to her husband." Money is only a symbol. The principal object of existence is prestige, popularity in worth-while circles. As a means to this, education is very highly valued. The qualities usually connoted by the word "education" are, however, not esteemed, and there is more and more vocational education, which has the advantage not only of costing money but also of being practically useful. The poorer people often buy a motor to help their children's social position at school. The children learn little except social values. (Eighty per cent. of the teachers are women.) They do not go to boarding-school, but they spend less and less time at home.



Another use for the invaluable Ford is that in it parents are able occasionally to see their offspring. But it is also used by the young for night-rides and petting-parties. According to a judge, "the automobile has become a house of prostitution on wheels."

A similar book about an English town would be a valuable enterprise. But "Middletown" also makes me wish more strongly than ever that some satirist would rewrite the "Lettres Persanes" in the vocabulary of Frazer and Malinowski. The Church of England, the Public Schools, polite society, the Law Courts, would all provide rich material. Has Montesquieu no spiritual posterity?

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

### A PSYCHO-ANALYST ON SHAKESPEARE

Madness in Shakespearian Tragedy. By H. SOMERVILLE. (Richards. 6s.)

MR. WYNDHAM LEWIS, who in "The Lion and the Fox" remarked that not enough was made of the madness of Shakespeare's heroic figures, introduces this book as a somewhat reluctant godparent. He is a little surprised, and small wonder, that his wee child, a mere side-issue, as it were a bastard begotten in a moment of absent-mindedness, should have grown so formidably. His remark was merely in opposition to those who would make too little of lunacy in the great figures of Shakespeare's tragedy. For, as Dr. Somerville does not fail to remind us, those whom the gods wish to destroy they first drive mad; and as tragedy deals with the destruction of men, we find that most of the great figures of tragedy are "mad," that is, acting abnormally under the excitement of great stress. Dr. Somerville might go through the whole of tragedy and psycho-analyze the great figures. Oedipus, for instance—well, we all know what his particular complex was; Orestes was clearly mad, since when he saw the Furies he was "hallucinating," as Dr. Somerville would say. The personages in Webster and Tourneur are mad, those in Lee are raving lunatics, Dryden's are all paranoiacs. Ibsen, also, is in the same boat: there is the master-builder as a clear case; in all tragedy it is the same—whom the gods wish. . . . In this respect Shakespeare does not seem to be different from any other writer.

Where he is different, however, is in his amazing knowledge of this new science: his tragic figures can be used as "cases," exactly on a par with those daily examined in Vienna, as Dr. Freud has already found out. Here and there, indeed, he deliberately sacrifices psychology to art. Dr. Somerville points out, as when he makes Macbeth and Brutus speak when they are "hallucinating" Banquo and Cæsar: when people have got to that stage, they can only gibber. Moreover, so Dr. Somerville, before Shakespeare drives them mad, he shows quite clearly that they already had the seeds of madness in them, or were putting themselves into a position where the stress would be so severe as to endanger their mental health. Thus Othello, being impotent, would almost certainly undergo enough stress to produce his "temporary madness" in marrying Desdemona. Timon's lavish lunacy is due to the fact that he was syphilitic, as Shakespeare indicates by his suspecting it so often in others. The types of insanity which developed in Hamlet, Ophelia, Constance, and the reasons for such development, are accurately traced by our poet, while the course of Lear's mania as exhibited in his play turns out to be a marvel of medical observation and documentation. Can it be that the poets, after all, observe life as keenly as the doctors?

There is one point, however, upon which poets and doctors are likely to disagree, and that is upon the definition of insanity. Of course, as we would all agree with Mr. Lewis and Dr. Somerville, we are all of us slightly insane sometimes. But then we all of us, and no doubt Mr. Lewis, believe that there are certain fundamental instincts—they constitute the moral sense—which may be irrational, but which keep society together. One of these is our dislike of killing each other in cold blood. This seems very strange to Dr. Somerville (though towards the end of the book he

grudgingly admits its almost universal existence), and proof of a mind subject to derangement. It was quite clear to Hamlet, for example, that Claudius ought to be killed, yet something hindered the carrying out of the deed. Macbeth and Brutus also felt this "mysterious 'it,'" which paralyzed their will-power. It turns out on analysis to have been a "fear, the nature and cause of which were unknown to the individuals." It was a somewhat exaggerated form of a quite common ailment, that "subconscious mental process known as identification." The hero puts himself in the victim's place. A little clearing up of complexes, and the murders could have been done without any fuss.

Remorse again is one of these troubles which a little psycho-therapy can clear up. Lady Macbeth would have been quite happy, and should enormously have enjoyed being queen, if only she could have forgotten about the murders for which she was partly responsible. She should have gone about murmuring "*Io triumphe!*" and having the best of possible times, instead of which she was dwelling in "doubtful joy" and almost envying the dead she had sent to the quiet of the grave. This being so, "one is compelled to take a serious view of her mental condition." She, like Macbeth, saw things which were not there; and indeed, "Similar hallucinations are a fairly frequent experience of men who are suffering the bitterness of unavailing remorse for having taken human life, unjustifiably—as it appeared to them." That last touch is deliciously sane.

Yet those extracts are not fair to the book, which, like all things written by trained minds on subjects outside their usual fare, is in many ways extraordinarily interesting, and, in its zestful following of the stages of dementia or derangement, does help to vivify Shakespeare's astonishing genius for getting things right. Dr. Somerville knows his Shakespeare well, and if he does not always get the poetic point—he cannot, for instance, see the emotional significance of Macbeth's "She should have died hereafter"—it is impossible to read him without being stimulated; and moreover, he sends one back to the text.

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

BE

UP-TO-DATE—

SHELLUBRICATE

## WYATT'S POETRY

**The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt; a Selection and a Study.** By E. M. W. TILLYARD. (The Scholartis Press. 7s. 6d.)

MR. TILLYARD, in his Preface to his selection from Sir Thomas Wyatt, suggests that "for the sake of his reputation, Wyatt had better not have imported the sonnet into England, for by so doing he purchased a text-book glory at the price of advertising the class of poems that does his poetical powers least credit." If it be so, everyone acquainted with Elizabethan minor poetry will think it a well-earned curse; and some who judge the Italian sonnet by its masterpieces may incline to the same opinion. It must needs be that offence come—the sonnet was bound to find its way into English—but that does not exonerate Wyatt, who opened the door to it. Nor are his own successes always the soundest example to posterity. A line like "The stars be hid that led me to this pain," though beautiful in itself, is more fatal in its effects than a dozen honest failures; nicely balanced on the edge of sincerity, it points the way to that standardization of literature, that art of casting inferior work in the mould of a distinguished tradition, which is the shelter of so many French novelists and English poets. Wyatt himself, when he had mastered the Italian sonnet, seems to have tired of it; perhaps he had realized the remarkable fossilizing powers of the form he was experimenting with, and how little it could ever be expected to render the beautiful fluidity of its prototype. For his sense of rhythm is of a higher quality than the material he had to work on. There is no more tedious reading than a series of love poems, unless they have extraordinary passion or formal beauty to recommend them; and there is very little passion in Wyatt's. He has, indeed, plenty of character, with quite a creditable degree of feeling, but with just that limitation of it, that something of bluntness and shallowness, which critics have generally agreed to call manly; his emotional strength lying chiefly in an innocent egotism which gives great vigour to the poems in which it has a free field. But his talent for verse-writing frequently carries off the most threadbare, and, as far as we can judge, hypothetical sentiments.

"If with complaint the pain might be exprest,  
That inwardly doth cause me sigh and groan,  
Your hard heart and your cruel breast  
Should sigh and plain for my unrest,  
And though it were of stone  
Yet should remorse cause it relent and moan."

The more you look at that, the less you will see in it; but taken at its face value, what could be pleasanter? In all but a very few of Wyatt's love songs we find that musical charm, that emotional vacuity:—

"And yet an heart that seems so tender  
Receiveth no drop of the stilling tears  
That alway still cause me to render  
The vain plaint that sounds not in her ears."

It is not easy to decide whether the last line and others like it are due to conscious art or a lucky hit; and perhaps Mr. Tillyard is inclined to be rather generous in giving Wyatt the benefit of the doubt. But as there is nothing in art which has not been, or may not be, done on purpose, it is permissible to take the view that generosity is the best policy. Clearly, however, Wyatt's prosodic ear had been not merely educated, but in part corrupted, by the direct influence of music; clearly, too, he is at his best in traditional English metres. And yet when all has been said of his own character and merits, and against the exotic and usually unsuccessful verse forms he introduced, we must admit it to be just that he should be remembered as the herald of the English Renaissance. This aesthetically incidental claim gives him an importance in English literature to which, without it, he could have no pretence.

Mr. Tillyard betrays no more than a modest bias in favour of his protégé; his psychology is attractively ingenuous, but some of his notes might have been left to the imagination. And it cannot be denied that sixty shortish poems, some very short, and some repeatedly anthologized, are a meagre offering to anyone with enough interest in Wyatt to read that number.

## MORE WAR BOOKS

**A Subaltern's War.** By CHARLES EDMONDS. (Davies. 7s. 6d.)  
**The Wet Flanders Plain.** By HENRY WILLIAMSON. (Beaumont Press. 25s.)

I CANNOT like either of these war books though they are written from exactly opposite points of view.

"A Subaltern's War" is in the "Soldiers' Tales" series. Its chief fault is that though Mr. Edmonds's experiences of the 1916 Somme offensive and of the Third Battle of Ypres were recorded not long after they happened, they have lost most of their documentary value because of his unwillingness to mention the name of his regiment, its recruiting district, the number of his brigade, or even that of his division. And there are dull loose passages of the sort that one is readier to excuse in battalion histories compiled for private circulation only:—

"At last I struggled up to the little half-broken pill-box and went in. The Colonel and Adjutant were plainly very pleased to see me, having given me up for lost. The battalion had been shattered, they said, but all objectives taken and held, a hundred and fifty prisoners made, and immense number of Bosches killed. Everyone had had adventures. Several officers had been killed, besides Kerr, who they feared was dying, but had been got down safely. Where had I been? I found that of my three, or maybe four, beautiful messages, with maps and times and places all complete, nothing had reached headquarters. They produced news of a few more of my men. The Colonel saw the Bosche revolver hanging at my belt and sent it down to the transport to be kept for me. They gave me the good news that Thorburn had been sent for and would join me to-night, and the bad news, too, that, casualties or no casualties, we were not to be relieved for three days. The Colonel suggested that when Thorburn arrived I should come and join them in the dugout and get some sleep."

The Colonel, the Adjutant, Kerr, Thorburn are undifferentiated characters for the reader. Mr. Edmonds does not attempt to reproduce his beautiful messages or the Colonel's words of greeting. He does not particularize the other fellows' adventures.

The nearest that we get to identifying his regiment is a hint that it was once exposed, with no handy dugouts near, to the rhetoric of "Hunter Bunter," its corps-commander. However, even Hunter Bunter could hardly have improved on this account of a British bombardment:—

"Suddenly the sky behind me threw up a stab of flame. A roll of thunder like the last trump itself opened with some few single blows and steadied into a throbbing roar. The shells screamed overhead so thick and fast they seemed to eclipse the sky as will an invisible roof, rumbling like earthquakes behind, crashing like a thousand cymbals before us, a pillar of fire against the dark sky, a pillar of cloud against the dawning east—leading us on!"

He has a third more workmanlike field-message style in which he speaks of casualties, the length and depth of their wounds and the animal noises that they made, and how so-and-so lost his way in the attack and how thirsty the men became, and how the stretcher-bearers got the wind up. But he spoils its force by quoting familiar passages of Shakespeare, Carlyle, Wordsworth, Kipling, and Bunyan. And he seems reticent about the really shameful things that happened. The Epilogue is a well-intentioned essay on militarism. He asks why, if the whole series of events from 1914-1919 was a futility, were we ex-Service men such fools as to take part in it? He asks whether we or our fathers made the war, planned it or desired it, and answers, "By no means." We had to enlist, he says, to save our country's shores. Or rather to save the sinking ship:—

"When the S.O.S. rockets go up from the bridge, when the boats are being manned, when the deck is awash, then is the time for courage, discipline, and silence; to take one's place and obey orders. It is not really helpful to criticize the captain and the crew for their present or for their past conduct."

This last sentence is intended as a nasty hit against "the disillusioned weaklings," writers, for instance, like Mr. Henry Williamson. Mr. Edmonds is still war-minded and writes about "Russia deserting her allies," in 1917, and about the "yellow streak" of pacifism.

Mr. Williamson's book is an all-yellow anti-war tract, the nine-days' diary of a recent visit to the battlefields. It is beautifully printed, so beautifully printed in fact that it is a little difficult to read. He has made the not very remark-



able discovery that Belgian peasants feel no sentimental friendliness to *soldats anglais retournés*, and have no hesitation in warning them off the fields that they once defended; that the estaminets keep up the war-time tradition of grossly overcharging their clients; and that tourists are besieged by souvenir-sellers whose prices range from twenty-five centimes for a military button to twenty francs for a Smith and Wesson revolver. (I remember visiting the field of Waterloo shortly before the war, and the prices for souvenirs were even higher. I had to pay the equivalent of twenty francs for a single shrapnel bullet.) He also rediscovers the joke against the American tourist:—

"I 'witnessed' a minor tragedy in one family, consisting of a big stout father, a large mother, and a very thin son in leather jerkin, plus fours, horn spectacles, and white-and-brown shoes.

"Now what do you want with a gun? The darned thing may be loaded. See here, take a button."

"The small boy made a decisive cut-away gesture of non-acceptance with his right hand.

"Aw, pop, you said I could have a gun."

"The revolver they were looking at was almost a lump of iron ore again.

"The darned thing's dangerous, I say. It may go off and shoot us all up."

"Oh, gee, you said I could have a gun."

"Wal, take a baynit."

"Nix on baynits. You said —"

"Will you take a button, or nuthin'?"

Mr. Williamson is apparently the father of a very much nicer little boy than the darned American youth:—

"... an innocent who with his friends in the village street laughs in the sunshine; he sings and smiles when he hears the bells on the wind. Must he, too, traverse a waste place of the earth: must the blood and sweat of his generation drip in agony, until the sun darken and fall down the sky, and rise no more upon his world?"

His fate, however, depends not on whether he listens to his father (who seems to have been a stout trench-fighter in his day) or proudly takes his place on the awash decks in obedience to the megaphoned orders of proved patriots like old Captain Charles Edmonds, M.C. (retired), but on—well, neither of these authors gives any clue to what it does depend on. But, his fate aside, my advice to him would be to be careful not to put out his tongue at the little American boy.

ROBERT GRAVES.

### A GREAT AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**The Story of San Michele.** By AXEL MUNTHE. (Murray. 16s.)

SAN MICHELE is the Italian home of the author. It occupies the site, on the island of Capri, of a villa to which Tiberius retired in his old age. Dr. Munthe was eighteen when he first saw the house and the derelict chapel out of which, by his own effort and that of the friendly, illiterate natives, his beautiful residence, with its archaeological and artistic treasures, its avenues of cypresses and garlands of vines, has been evolved. It is sad to learn, from the final chapter, that the author, now having the leisure of retirement, is threatened with blindness, and may yet be debarred by the strong Italian sunlight from fulfilling his lifelong dream of spending at San Michele his declining years.

But, fascinating as are the descriptions of it and the story of its building, San Michele forms only the background of this remarkable book, as it has formed only the background of its owner's life. Of Scandinavian origin, Dr. Munthe, whose "Red Cross and Iron Cross" was among the most poignant records of the Great War, has had a versatile and intensive career, and in these extraordinarily vital and varied pages he gives us one of the frankest and most absorbing autobiographies of recent years. He was the youngest student who had ever received the M.D. degree in Paris. For some time he was a fashionable nerve specialist in that city, and later enjoyed even greater success in Rome, where he occupied Keats's house. He has travelled—sometimes by strange methods and on weird errands—all over Europe; and he has seen, even for a great doctor, more than his share of horrors. He recalls the days when the operating theatres in the Paris hospitals were like shambles. Later he saw cholera killing more than a thousand people a day in Naples, Messina burying over one hundred thousand men, women, and children in a minute,

and Death, "his arms red with blood to the elbows," reaping the grim harvest of Verdun. Withal, he has retained the sensitiveness that made him a great nerve healer, and consequently, against his own will, a Society favourite. He speaks without mock modesty of the work which he was able to do for the shell-shocked soldiers during the War. But he writes with bitterly humorous contempt of the fashionable ladies who flocked to him in Paris and Rome. His sympathies have always been passionately democratic and humanitarian. His deep understanding and love of animals finds constant and sometimes delightfully whimsical expression. Particularly fascinating is his account of the transformation, through his agency, of Mount Barbarossa from a scene of bird slaughter to a bird sanctuary.

This volume of over five hundred pages, with its admirably flexible style, is uncommonly rich in objective interest. It is packed with good stories, with vivid scenes of travel in many lands, and with memorable portraits of strangely varied characters. It is equally engrossing as a revelation of temperament. Dr. Munthe is both realist and mystic, scientist and poet, caustic philosopher and kindly essayist. Above all, he is the apostle of pity, who sums up his many-sided commentary on life with a vision of the Day of Judgment, in which he pictures Saint Francis of Assisi quietly triumphing over the thunderous prophets of the Law.

### TOO MUCH OF DOLITTLE

**Dr. Dolittle in the Moon.** By HUGH LOFTING. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

MR. HUGH LOFTING has a deservedly great reputation in the nursery. The earlier books, and in particular "Dr. Dolittle's Circus," reached a very high standard indeed. Every favourable review of a child's book tends to begin with the words: "Not since the days of Lewis Carroll . . .", and to continue grandiloquently about "nursery classics." Our experience has been that post-war children do not take readily to "Alice." They do, however, feel enthusiastic about the earlier Dolittles, but they are more discriminating than their elders sometimes suppose. One doubts if the present volume will fulfill the expectations of any child who has only read the cream of this author's work.

This time the Doctor sets out on an expedition to the Moon, foreshadowed in the last book. We are told nothing about his journey, which is made on the back of a giant moth, in company with the monkey, Chee-Chee, the inevitable Polyxena, and the cobbler's boy, Tommy Stubbins. The butter is spread very thinly in pages and pages of description of conditions in the moon without much point or fun. The Doctor, who used to be such a delightful mixture of humour and sanity, has become rather a dull old foggy; and Jip, Gub-Gub, and Dab-Dab, who were his most attractive satellites, do not appear in this book at all.

Mr. Lofting even becomes a propagandist in describing lunar society, and brings in a sort of League of Nations arrangement, by which the inhabitants, insect and vegetable (there are no animals), avert strife between themselves. It is possible that a child might feel that the moon-people were so dull that he would not care a button if they fought or not. We remember an earlier piece of propaganda of the author's—the speech of the mother-fox in the "Circus"—which was so delightful a part of the story (and the Doctor's solution was so characteristically ingenious) that it surely made an indelible impression on the youthful reader. Here we have the pill without the sugar.

Besides the plants, with whom the Doctor soon establishes communication, there is a solitary giant on the Moon, who finally kidnaps the Doctor and the two creatures, sending back Stubbins alone to earth on another moth's back. Thus the way is paved for next Christmas to see another Dolittle, this time the rescue or escape of the Doctor; for getting there and back in one book would have been a waste of copy.

There is no doubt that writers of successful children's books are in an even worse dilemma than those who cater for the adult reader. Clamours immediately arise for more, and more of the same sort too, and they would be strong-minded indeed if they could resist the demand. Their original ideas may have been superb, but it is hard to



emulate them Christmas after Christmas ; and when it comes to doing it twice a year . . . well, the plain fact is that it is too much to expect, and not even Mr. Lofting can do it!

### THE MIDDLE CLASSES

**The Restoration and the July Monarchy.** By J. LUCAS DUBRETON. (Heinemann. 12s. 6d.)

**Monsieur Thiers.** By MAURICE RECLUS. (Plon. 15 fr.)

M. DUBRETON'S is the latest volume to be translated of the "National History of France" ("L'Histoire de France racontée à tous"), and the last of the whole series, except for M. Madelin's long-awaited history of the 1st, and M. Arnaud's of the 2nd Empire. The "National History of France" is a very worthy achievement, containing some first-rate volumes, and M. Dubreton's book does not disgrace the company in which it finds itself. It is a pity that he has not been better translated. The English often reads clumsily, and is on occasion inaccurate. In the third line *courtesan* is translated *courtesan*, while *minion* is a singularly unhappy version of *ménin*. Nevertheless, a lot of people should enjoy reading M. Dubreton's book. The period is a fascinating one, and not nearly enough has been written about it in English. Also it provides an effective contrast in methods to the same period in England. Both the Restoration and the July Monarchy were failures, for both ended in revolution. Yet in many ways France has never been so well governed as she was between 1815 and 1848. These were the only years when France has balanced her budget and pursued a firm peace policy. Because of this the period is unattractive, and the leading figures are unattractive too. The Baron Louis is the hero of the first years, and M. Guizot of the last. These thirty-three years were the heyday of French parliamentary government. Yet both Louis XVIII. and Louis Philippe were cleverer than any of their Ministers. The restored Bourbons had learned a good deal and forgotten a good deal, too. The same could not always be said of their supporters. During his effective years of rule, Louis XVIII. was always at war with his friends.

Charles X., the stupid member of the family, certainly came to a bad end, because he tried to put the clock back and filch from the middle classes the hard-earned gains of the Revolution. In so doing he threw the bourgeoisie into the arms of the working classes and collapsed.

Louis Philippe made no such mistake. His reign celebrates the self-conscious apotheosis of the middle class. But Louis Philippe, like the middle class, was too unadventurous. Peace abroad would have been all right, could he have initiated a lively home policy and so provided a practical substitute for Bonapartism, and made some attempt to grapple with the industrial revolution. He might in fact have anticipated Napoleon III. But for all his cleverness, he was not blessed with an insight, which was denied to all his advisers. As a result, boredom was triumphant, the more unstable members of the bourgeoisie again turned to the working classes, and Louis Philippe himself collapsed.

Monsieur Thiers, at the age of thirty-two was one of the bright young men who helped by his editorship of the *CONSTITUTIONNEL* to bring down Charles X. M. Dubreton shows him flitting through the July Monarchy, but greatly to his own surprise and indignation, never quite arriving. Louis Philippe had taken his measure. He was twice chief minister for a short time, and he was twice tricked by his royal master. In each case the king was probably right, though M. Dubreton does not wholly agree. But future generations should applaud Louis Philippe for not embarking on wild crusades in Spain and Syria. M. Reclus (who adopts not only the method, but on occasion the vocabulary of Mr. Lytton Strachey) provides a short life of Monsieur Thiers which, except from some exasperating mannerisms in the modern style, is a highly entertaining book. He does not pretend to add to the bulk of what is already known, but runs everything together very intelligently. This is a book that might be profitably translated.

M. Thiers entered practical politics in 1830, and left them in 1873, having been continuously in affairs, save for a

long period of obfuscation when he was duped by Napoleon III. as he had been duped by Louis Philippe. Thus he presided over the July Monarchy, the Second Republic, the 2nd Empire, and the birth of the Third Republic. It is not till 1866, however, that his career was in any way meritorious. During the last period of his life, he deserved well of his country. Cured by Napoleon III. of Bonapartism, he emerged as a good pacifist, violently opposed the Franco-Prussian war, and would have got far better terms out of Bismarck than he did had he been able to silence Gambetta, a typically French demagogic jingo. Experts still differ as to the degree of responsibility which must attach to Monsieur Thiers for the brutality with which the Commune was suppressed. All agree that during the last three years of his official life, he managed both home and foreign policy with consummate sagacity. He can never have been an attractive figure in either public or private life, but he was, as Bismarck said, a man of "immense talent." After retiring from politics as the result of lobby intrigue, he continued busy, while his public fame grew vaster and vaster. His funeral, which took place on September 8th, 1877, presented a spectacle of unparalleled splendour. Even his bitterest enemies were compelled to approve. "Je vous assure," wrote Flaubert next day, "que c'était sublime. Cette manifestation réellement nationale m'a empoigné. Je n'aimais pas ce roi des prud'hommes, n'importe ! Comparé aux autres qui l'entouraient, c'est un géant et puis il avait une vertu rare, le patriotisme. Personne n'a résumé comme lui la France, de là l'immense effet de sa mort."

The hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen, who followed the cortège, were liquidating a century of political and economic history. Monsieur Thiers represented the unadulterated bourgeoisie with many of its virtues and nearly all its vices. With his death the period of the French Revolution comes to an end. The bourgeois could do no more for France, who now had to turn to new leaders to work out her destiny. Opinions will differ as to the extent to which she has found them.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

### AUCTION BRIDGE

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#### THE HIGH-LOW DISCARD

"PARTNER," said B to A at the end of the hand, "why didn't you continue your Hearts? I showed you I had at least four of them (in point of fact I had six)—you had five yourself—and so declarer could have had four at the outside, and actually had only two. We made the next four tricks if you hadn't stopped leading them."

"You showed me you had four?" answered A. "Why, I understood the very reverse. You played the 9 and then the 3, so I assumed Z had all the others."

"But, my dear A, surely you know that if I play a high card of your suit and then a low one it means that I want you to go on with it? That's what the 'peter' is for."

"Sorry," said A. "I was always told it meant a doubleton. I wish I could get these dashed conventions straight."

The above is, I think, a fair sample of the sort of dialogue one often overhears with reference to the High-Low discard. Beginners find it very troublesome. They are sometimes taught (as A had been) that to play High-Low indicates a doubleton; sometimes that it indicates strength in the suit. What, they ask plaintively, are they supposed to assume when confronted by this particular discard?

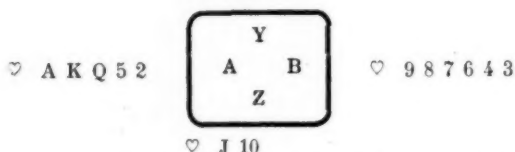
The answer, as B's remarks suggest, is in fact simple. The play of a high card followed by a low one of the same suit means, definitely, only one thing—that the player of these cards is anxious that the suit should be led, or that the lead of it should be continued. The beginner should dismiss from his mind his theories about strength, length, and all the rest of it; he will discover in time that these are merely special applications of the general proposition enunciated.

There are in fact three main classes of occasion upon which the High-Low discard is useful.

I.—Where the discarder (I use the term "discarder" here merely in the sense of playing to the trick) is strong in the

suit led, and therefore wants the lead of it continued. Mainly, of course, this situation arises where the hand is being played in No-Trumps.

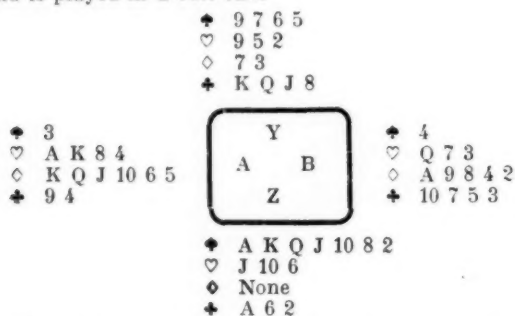
♥ None



♥ J 10

Here, for example, is the Heart distribution to which the dialogue at the beginning of this article refers. B (correctly) played the 9 to the first trick and the 3 to the second; A, a novice, unfortunately took this as indicating a doubleton and discontinued the suit. Four tricks thrown away!

This indication of strength can be very useful when the hand is played in a suit call.



Thus, in the above hand, played by Z in Five Spades, the situation was saved by the presence of mind of B. "Sensing" from the calling that Z was void of Diamonds, he played the 7, 3 of Hearts to A's King, Ace. Thus encouraged, A led a Heart at trick 3 and not, as he would otherwise have done, the King of Diamonds. A B were able, in consequence, to defeat Z's contract by one trick.

II.—Where the discarder has a doubleton, and can trump the suit if the lead of it is continued. This is the familiar "call for a ruff" with which most novices are acquainted. Opinions differ, however, as to whether one should "peter" with an honour (i.e., when one holds Queen, Knave, or Ten and one other in the suit led.) Personally I do so, holding Knave or Ten, unless I think my partner is likely to be deceived into thinking that the card first played is a singleton.

III.—Where the discarder wishes to draw attention to an Ace or other entry card, or to the suit that he wants his partner to lead. It may be all-important, in No-Trumps especially, to avail one's self of this accepted method of signalling information. But it must be borne in mind that the discard of two of the suit may weaken it so much as to make the sacrifice not worth while. In such cases the discarder has to choose between conveying positive information at a high price, and conveying the same information less explicitly by such other means as are available.

## NOVELS IN BRIEF

**The Grand Manner.** By LOUIS KRONENBERGER. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.)

This is a fictitious biography, in the manner, as Miss Beatrice Kean Seymour suggests, of Mr. Lytton Strachey. It relates the life and death of Rudolph IV. of Hedenstrom (1816-1891). In the course of his novel, Mr. Kronenberger seems to outgrow the impulse or influence which stimulated him to write it. The first half is frankly imitative, with all the tricks which characterize the Strachey school, the devices of supposition ("That is what Rudolph must have seen, for the princess in Dorothea he would have taken for granted"), and allusion to letters, memoirs, and portraits ("The portrait which Giacomo has painted of Dorothea at nineteen, and which should have been painted by Greuze or Fragonard, does not leave us wondering very long."). But, halfway through, his people begin to interest him more than his manner, and the second half is written in the straightforward analytic-narrative style of the novelist. Unfortunately, at the point where the change comes, at Claire's defection, the story breaks down; but it recovers almost

immediately. Mr. Kronenberger appears to attribute the development of nineteenth-century Liberalism as much to the weakness and vanity of the kings as to the ambition and idealism of the bourgeoisie.

**The Missing Masterpiece.** By HILAIRE BELLOC. With Forty-One Drawings by G. K. CHESTERTON. (Arrowsmith. 7s. 6d.)

The Frenchman Bourrot painted a masterpiece. "In one corner was a sort of staring human eye; beneath this, criss-cross, a series of bands of bright vermilion, but at an angle to these another series of bands emphatically yellow; and beneath them, as a field, a sort of mauve, very sinister; below all, upon the outer edge, was something which might have been a tropical fruit or a balloon but half inflated, and this was of a tender grey." It was called "L'Ame Bourgeoise," or, in English, "The Middle Class Soul"; and it was presented by the artist to Mr. Delgairn, an English squire, whose crippled son made two exact copies of it. With the boom in Bourrots, Sir Henry Bensington bought it for £500, and immediately received an offer of £20,000. Then it was lost, and Sir Henry's two detectives, outwitting two wily foreign dealers, discovered the copies. Mr. Belloc's satire is directed as much against the gullibility as against the ruthlessness and cunning of his financiers. Sir Henry's assumption that Harry Delgairn must have stolen the masterpiece is a beautiful touch. The other characters, the Duke, the Duchess and her toadies, the Frenchman and the Italian, are figures of the keenest satire. But often Mr. Belloc wears rather thin: "In spite of his French blood (or training?) M. Henri Caen decided to do without dinner. . . ." Mr. Chesterton's drawings are humorously ingenious and expressive.

**Frolic Wind.** By RICHARD OKE. (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.)

Mr. Oke has talent. He can write; he can make attractive people and manipulate them with skill; he can create an atmosphere. He is also something of a satirist, although his view is more romantic than satiric. But, unfortunately, his work is marred by an excessive cleverness and a forced ending. The action passes in the course of an afternoon and evening at Pagnell Bois, a great mansion, where the four aged sisters, Ladies Athaliah, Damaris, Bernice, and Cleone, entertain celebrities. Among the guests are Charlecote, a painter; Miss Vulliamy, a writer of the Gertrude Stein school; General Tresmand, who fired on a crowd of natives in India, but is afraid of thunderstorms; the Princess Rosencrantz-Guildenstern, who keeps four gigolos in her villa at Biarritz and is mentioned in Proust. Charlecote falls in love with Cecily Jewell, a dependent of the Jeunes. The working out of Cecily's spiritual development under Charlecote's influence as the day wears on is, from the point of view of construction as well as characterization, masterly. The novel advances without stumbling to the climax, Lady Athaliah's death and the discovery of her secret (the pornographic treasures of her tower). Perhaps the best thing in the book is the description of Mr. Roxborough as he comes down from the tower: "On his face was an expression of immense experience." But the final scene is artificial. The novel is turned into a discussion play.

**We That Are Left.** By ISABEL C. CLARKE. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

Miss Clarke has written an old-fashioned story about post-war people. It is long and sad; but we are not as susceptible as we were in King Edward's time, and perhaps Miss Clarke has not caught the effective sentimental-pathetic. After the war, in which they lost two of their sons, the Lacey's are left impoverished and cynical with three children, their daughters, Olwen and Alison, and Aubrey, a boy of seventeen, whose nervous system had been shattered in an air-raid. Olwen is the typical modern girl, as hard as nails, without faith or illusions. Alison is wrapped up in Aubrey, whom the others neglect and despise. To provide for him, she marries Clyde Delarode, a Canadian millionaire. The story centres round Delarode's moulding and disciplining of Aubrey. Even the most objective reader (and this is hardly the kind of novel to be read objectively) will not have much patience with Miss Clarke's characters, let alone sympathy with what he understands to be her view of them. Olwen, for example, would have to be much denser than she is represented to believe that Alison took Delarode away from her. A knowledge of human nature is supposed to be an essential part of a girl like Olwen. Delarode is surely the last person to be trusted with a neurasthenic. He is a clumsy sadist. Alison is better. Her devotion to Aubrey is quite touching.

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## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

## GOLD—MEXICAN AND CANADIAN EAGLE—CANADIAN AND AMERICAN MARKETS—CHASE BANK

THE City has waited upon the return this week of the Governor of the Bank from his holidays (*sic*) in America with as much longing as the biblical father waited for the coming of his prodigal son. It is unfortunate that in this case the fatted (golden) calf should have wasted away so much in the absence of the prodigal son. The gold holding in the issue department of the Bank now stands at a little over £139 million, which is about £24 million less than it was seven weeks ago. This loss of gold has occurred in spite of the fact that our Bank rate is at  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., while the New York rate is 5 per cent., and the Paris rate is only at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Can Mr. Norman restore order in a world of Bank rate chaos? The City is full of rumours. It is whispered in one quarter that Mr. Norman has secured the support of the U.S. Federal Reserve authorities in the shape of a dollar credit, and in another that the French Government has been trying to influence British opinion at The Hague by staging an attack on sterling. At the moment of writing the French exchange has moved in our favour and it is no longer profitable to ship gold to Paris. The obvious explanation of the recent gold efflux to Paris—that the French private banks, having to meet an increased demand for money, have been converting their foreign balances into francs—may, after all, be the correct one. The last return of the Bank of France certainly showed, by the sharp rise in its holding of commercial bills, that the private banks had been taking the usual steps to meet a money stringency. But where is the co-operation between the Central Banks of the Great Powers which we have been led to expect?

Not long ago (*vide* THE NATION of June 15th) a "professional" movement was organized in the oil share market the origin of which we traced to a dealer's circular on Canadian and Mexican Eagle. This circular, which impressed us as singularly ill-informed, argued that Canadian Eagle was suffering from a lack of dividends on its Eagle Oil Transport shares and from the heavy cost of building its new refinery in Venezuela, but that Mexican Eagle, on the bigger production from its Isthmus fields, should be able to earn £1,000,000 after paying its own preference share dividends. The lie to this gossip is now given in the directors' reports for 1928, which disclose a loss for Mexican Eagle of \$318,399 (Mexican pesos) and a profit for the Canadian Eagle, after creating an investment reserve, of \$2,059,775 (Canadian dollars). The Canadian Eagle, after writing off \$221,596 for organization expenses and paying its own first preference dividends of \$934,186, has had to pay the Mexican Eagle first preference dividends (\$795,923) under the agreement by which each guarantees the other's preference share obligations. If the two results are combined it will be found that the Canadian and Mexican Eagle made net profits, before preference share dividends, of 3,801,149 Mexican pesos, against 3,524,474 Mexican pesos for the old Mexican Eagle, taking three Canadian dollars to equal six Mexican pesos.

From the investment point of view there can be no question but that Canadian Eagle 7 per cent. first preference shares, the dividends on which were covered 2.2 times last year, are attractive to yield 7.35 per cent. at the present market price of 11s. 9d. for the \$3 shares. Under the terms of the guarantee each company meets its own dividend requirements first, according to the class of share. It follows that in 1928 Mexican Eagle first preference share dividends were covered only 1.41 times. Yet these 4 Mexican pesos shares at 7s. 9d. yield slightly less than the Canadian preference. There is also no question but that from the speculative point of view as against the invest-

ment, Mexican Eagle ordinary shares remain a better gamble than Canadian Eagle. The directors of Mexican Eagle refer to "the marked improvement in the Company's prospects," meaning thereby that with a more satisfactory petroleum law, field exploration work will go ahead and production will increase. The output of Mexican Eagle for the first six months of the year shows an average increase of 9,600 barrels a day as compared with the corresponding period of 1928. At this rate the 1929 production will amount to 9,583,000 barrels against 6,079,807 barrels in 1928. Further the potential production of the new Tonala field is estimated at 27,000 barrels a day or 9,855,000 barrels a year. It is obvious that when over-production comes to an end in the American oil industry and the price of crude oil rises (a possibility, say, in 1930), Mexican Eagle ordinary shares will be the favourite production gamble. These 4 pesos (8s.) shares are now quoted at 14s. 6d. against a high level of 18s. 4d. this year.

A much more cheerful feeling exists in the Canadian stock markets. First, the rise in the price of wheat, following on the severe drought and the withholding of the carry-over wheat from the market, is expected to yield the Canadian farmer a better return in spite of a short crop. Secondly, the heavy borrowings of Canadian railways this year will lead to useful orders for the iron and steel and engineering industries. Thirdly, the increase in consumption of the Canadian newsprint is enabling that industry to absorb its over-capacity. Fourthly, some important mergers among Canadian power companies are in contemplation. This changed sentiment accounts for the recovery in the price of Massey Harris shares and the leading newsprint and power companies' shares. The New York market, on the other hand, has been irregular, and it seems reasonable to expect a reaction in public utilities' stocks after their recent display of pyrotechnics (Hydro-Electric Securities, for example, are now \$78 against \$85 on June 1st). The "bull" movement in public utilities has been assisted by the talk of mergers and combinations. There have already been a number of mergers among public utilities. Now it is suggested that the merger companies will be brought under the control of the big holding companies. Then, of course, the "bulls" will begin to talk of merging the holding companies. Clearly the market in public utilities is reaching a dangerous stage. To those contemplating the taking of profits we would suggest a purchase of Chase National Bank shares at 226.

The ownership of Chase National Bank \$20 shares carries with it ownership of a like number of shares of no par value in the Chase Securities Corporation. The Chase National Bank has been expanding rapidly. In April this year it took over the American Express Company by an exchange of stock, a deal which is expected to increase materially its earnings. Next came the merger between National Park Bank and the Chase Bank which is to be submitted for the ratification of the shareholders on August 12th. The completion of this merger will make the Chase National the second largest bank in America. The merger calls for a share for share exchange of the \$20 par stock of the Chase Bank and the Park Bank after an equalizing stock dividend of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. has been paid to the shareholders of the Chase Bank. The new Chase stock is expected to receive \$4 dividends. Allowing for the stock dividend of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. the yield on present Chase National Bank stock at 226 will be over 2 per cent., which compares favourably with National City Bank stock which is selling to yield 1 per cent. Moreover, there is the chance of valuable rights accruing to Chase National Bank stockholders on the completion of the merger with the National Park Bank.

